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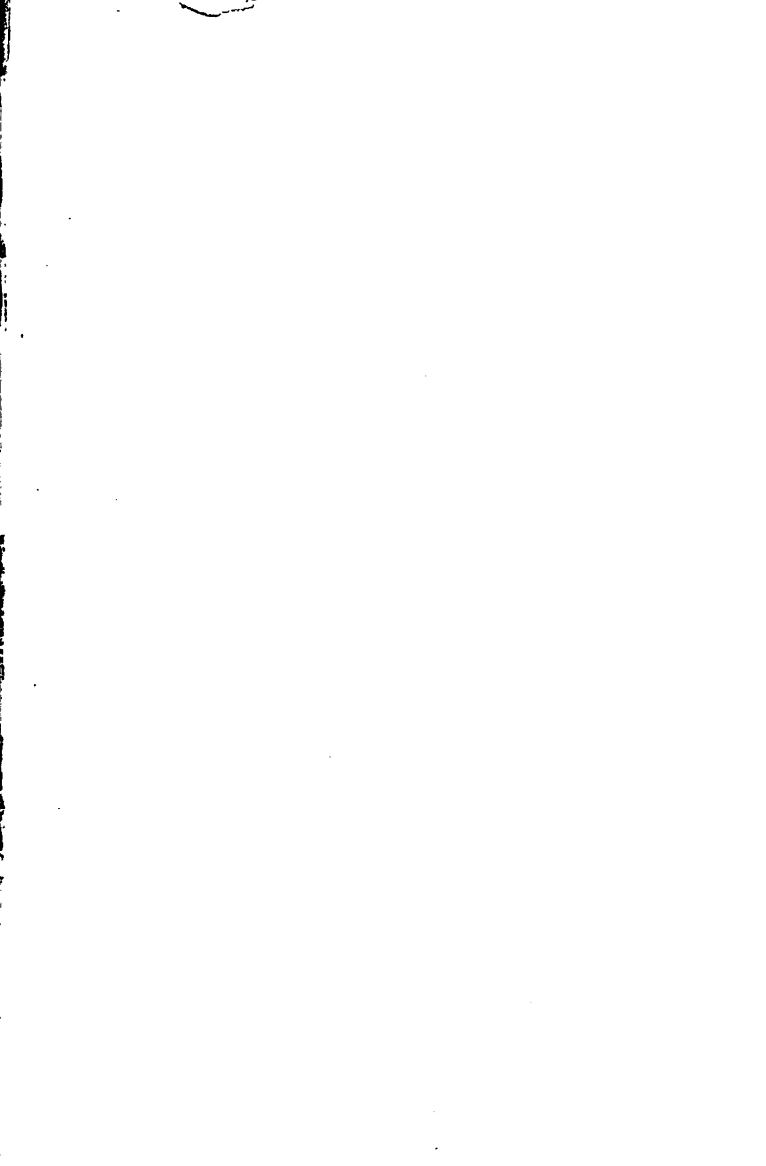
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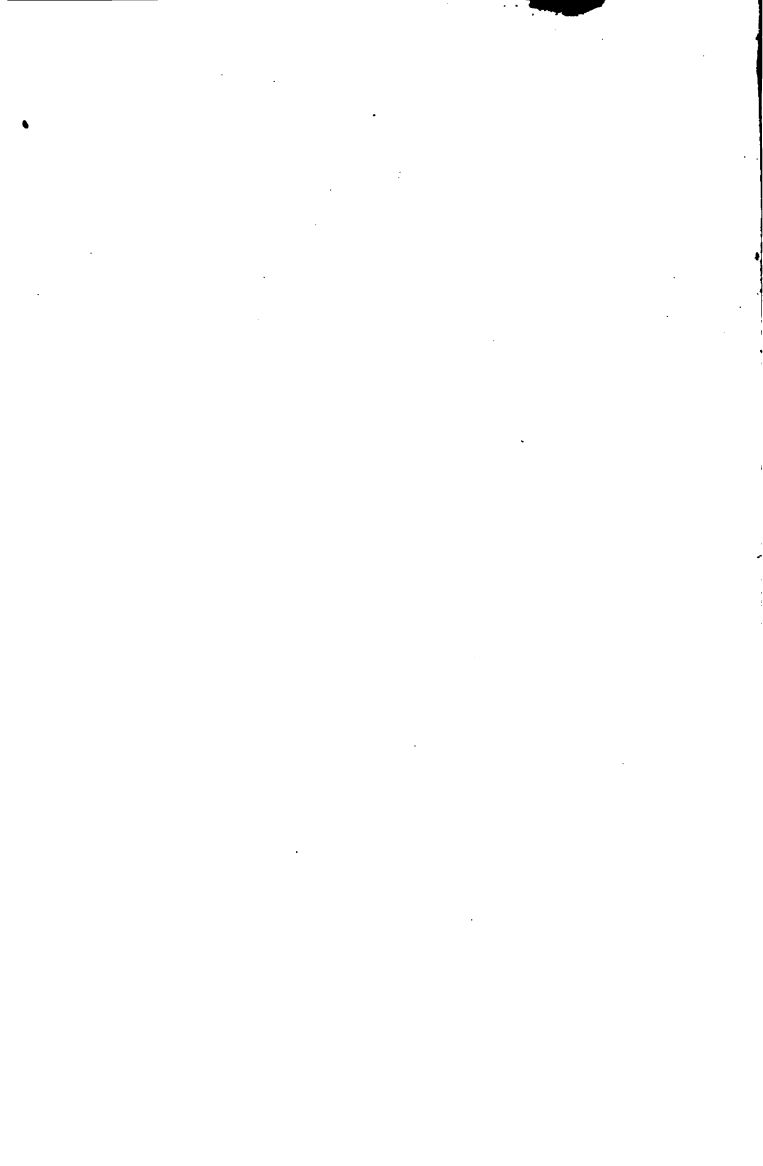
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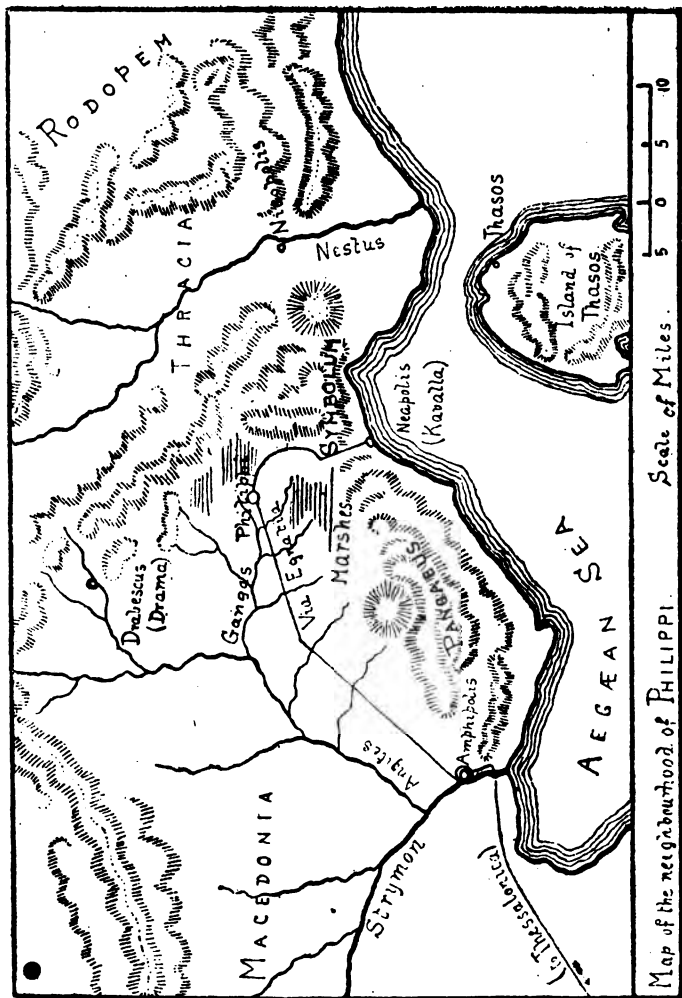
THE EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL

TO THE

PHILIPPIANS

AND TO

PHILEMON.



Map of the neighbourhood of PHILIPPI.

Scale of Miles.

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EDITED BY PROF. J. ESTLIN CARPENTER, M.A.



THE EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL

TO THE

PHILIPPIANS

AND TO

PHILEMON,

EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED.

BY

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LONDON:

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION,

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JUL 14 1993

PREFACE.

THE following pages are largely the result of work in practical teaching. In class and in the pulpit I have more than once tried to make it clear that these are real letters of a man who loved his fellow-men, and gave his life in the service of the Gospel.

The critical question as to the authenticity of the letters is not here touched upon. But I have faced it, I believe, with perfect frankness, and with the result that it appears to me immeasurably more difficult to account reasonably for these two letters on any other theory than that they came out of the heart of Paul.

If there is any value in this little book, it is because I have been able to profit by the scholarship and the insight of others. It will be evident, especially, how very freely I have made use of the commentaries of Bishop Lightfoot. I make no apology for this, because I make no claim to

independent scholarship, and only desire, if it may be, to help others to learn what I have learnt, and to enjoy what has been a joy to me.

V. D. D.

LIVERPOOL, *Easter* 1889.

EDITORIAL NOTE.

IN order to promote the use of the Revised Version in the study of the New Testament, this commentary has been adapted to it.

J. E. C.

CONTENTS.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS:—

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1—35
I. PHILIPPI	1
II. THE FIRST COMING OF PAUL TO PHILIPPI	7
III. PAUL'S LATER VISITS TO PHILIPPI, AND THE WRITING OF HIS LETTER	16
IV. PAUL AS A PRISONER IN ROME . . .	21
V. THE CHARACTER AND CONTENTS OF THE LETTER	29
COMMENTARY	37—136
I.	37
II.	67
III.	96
IV.	118

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON:—

INTRODUCTION	137
COMMENTARY	143



THE EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS AND TO PHILEMON.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

PHILIPPI.*

PHILIPPI, which was the scene of the first preaching of Christianity in Europe of which we have any record, is now a heap of ruins. The little Turkish village Filibedjik, which, until quite recently, so preserved the old name, has served to guide modern archæologists to the site. Remains of both the Greek and Roman periods of the city's history can still be clearly traced. There is a commanding citadel, with massive walls of Greek workmanship, standing out from the surrounding hills into the plain of Philippi.

* See Lightfoot, *Philippians, Introduction*, iii. ; Renan, *St. Paul*, ch. vi. ; Farrar, *St. Paul*, ch. xxv. ; *Bible for Young People*, vol. vi., ch. vii. ; Conybeare and Howson, *St. Paul*, ch. ix. ; Cousinéry, *Voyage dans la Macédoine* (Paris : 1831), vol. ii., ch. x. ; *Mission Archéologique de Macédoine, par Léo Heuzey et H. Daumet* (Paris : 1864-76). The journey was made in 1861, and the first part, containing the account of Philippi, published in 1864.

Within the eastern gate one sees how a Greek theatre was hewn in part out of the solid rock of the hillside ; while close at hand there are inscriptions on the smoothed surface of the rock, which show that a temple of the Roman deity Silvanus once stood there. The road of approach from two directions is lined with tombs bearing many Roman inscriptions. In the lower town not far from the forum there is a group of four stately columns, supposed to have belonged to some municipal building.

But when the Apostle Paul first entered Philippi, probably in the year 52 or 53 A.D., the city showed no signs of decay, and in those early days of the Roman Empire it was a place of some importance. Raised by Augustus to the rank of a military colony, it served as an outpost to hold in check the wild Thracian tribes of the mountain country to the north. It was also a station on the Via Egnatia, the great military road which led from Dyrrhachium on the Adriatic eastward through Edessa, Thessalonica, Amphipolis, to the Hellespont, and was the highway by land between Italy and Asia Minor.

1. Description of the Neighbourhood.

The site of Philippi is some eight or ten miles from the coast, thirty-three miles north-east of Amphipolis, and one hundred miles from Thessalonica. It is shut in from the sea by a circle of hills. On the south-west the range of the Pangæus, formerly rich in silver mines, rises to a height of over six thousand feet, snow-capt until far into the summer ; the eastern slopes of this range descend on to a lower ridge, the Symbolum, over which the Via Egnatia, turning to the south at Philippi, comes down to the sea at Neapolis (the modern Kavalla).

Eastward of the pass of the Symbolum the hills again rise to a considerable height, and, extending far inland to the north, form a massive barrier between Philippi and the valley of the Nestus, which divides Macedonia from Thrace. From the highest point of the Via Egnatia, crossing the Symbolum, there is to the south a glorious sea view, the roadstead of Neapolis at one's feet, the island of Thasos only a few miles distant, and on the southern horizon the grand promontory of Mount Athos. To the east are seen peaks of the island of Samothrace, which on the other side are visible also from the plains of Troy.

Looking to the north the view is very different. A great amphitheatre of mountains completely shuts in the level plain of Philippi, except on the north-east, where the waters of innumerable streams, first gathering into reedy marshes, flow down into the river Angitas, and so join the Strymon a few miles above Amphipolis. The plain of Philippi is one branch of the larger valley of Drama, described by all travellers as wonderfully fertile. The courses of its many streams are marked by the luxuriant growth of trees, while the plains in modern times have borne abundant crops of cotton, tobacco, rice and maize. In the marshes the long-horned buffaloes may be seen, often standing up to their necks in the cool waters. From the hills the streams come down wonderfully clear, sparkling over the white marble of their rocky beds. Among the flowers the hundred-petalled rose in its season is the glory of that country.

2. History of the City.

But the ancient wealth of the district, long before the

time of the Roman conquest, was chiefly in its minerals. There were the silver mines of Pangæus, mentioned by Herodotus; and, more precious still, the rich gold mines of the hills to the east, bordering on Thrace, which were defended by the citadel of Philippi. It was doubtless these treasures which first attracted Greek settlers from Thasos to the spot. Called by them Crenides (the place of springs), the city received its later name from Philip king of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. He, after the taking of Potidæa from the Athenians in 356 B.C., extended his dominion still further east, and founded a Macedonian city on the old Greek site, to be known henceforth as Philippi.

With the rest of Macedonia, Philippi passed in the year 168 B.C. into the hands of the Romans, and in 42 B.C. witnessed the last great battle of the Republican party, led by Brutus and Cassius, against the Triumvirs, Octavianus and Antony.*

* The troops of the Republican leaders had penetrated through the difficult passes on the east, and occupied the heights by Philippi, and the pass to the sea, having their ships at Neapolis, and stores also at Thasos; while Octavianus and Antony were encamped in the plain below, to the west of the Gangites. Remains of earth-works can still be traced crossing the Via Egnatia some little distance westward of the city, and uniting two hills on which are supposed to have been the camps of Brutus and Cassius. Near the crossing of the road still stands a triumphal arch, which probably commemorated the imperial victory. The description of the battle in Shakspeare's *Julius Caesar* (Act v.) accurately represents the nature of the country and the relative position of the opposing forces, except that it reverses the places of the two Triumvirs as given by Plutarch. Really Octavianus was "on the left hand of the even field" opposite the camp of Brutus. Shakspeare also condenses

The complete victory of the Triumvirs was commemorated on the spot by raising Philippi to the rank of a Roman colony; and when twelve years later Octavianus had also crushed Antony, and as Augustus became the first emperor of Rome, he caused many of the broken party of his great rival to settle down along the Macedonian coast, and so further strengthened the Roman element at Philippi.

3. *Character of the Community.*

Such a colony reproduced in miniature something of the political life of Rome itself. It was free from any intrusion on the part of the governor of the province, and had its own chief magistrates, elected annually, two in number, properly called Duumviri, who were, however, apt to arrogate the higher title of Prætor to themselves (*Acts* xvi. 20). It was their duty to administer the Roman law, and they were attended by officers similar to the lictors of the old republic (*Acts* xvi. 35). Light-foot points out that these features of the political life of Philippi seem to have suggested to Paul more than one of the expressions of his letter: "Addressing a Roman colony from the Roman metropolis, writing as a citizen to citizens, he recurs to the political franchise as an apt symbol of the higher privileges of their heavenly calling, to the political life as a suggestive metaphor for the duties of their Christian profession" (*Phil.* i. 27, iii. 20; *Introduction*, iii.).

what were actually two battles into the episodes of a single day. On the death of Cassius his body was sent across to Thasos, and only after twenty days, being defeated in a second battle, Brutus also died, "the noblest Roman of them all," at Philippi.

The members of the church would at any rate be familiar with the duties and privileges of citizenship, although we have no means of telling how many of them, if any, were actually citizens themselves.

It is, however, clear that the proportion of the Jews in this church was only small. As a military station rather than a commercial centre, we are not surprised to find that Philippi had not attracted many Jewish settlers. In this respect it differed from Berœa, and still more from Thessalonica, where there was a large Jewish quarter (*Acts* xvii. 1, 10). Philippi had not even a synagogue, but only a "place of prayer" (*Acts* xvi. 13), which perhaps did not imply any building at all, by the stream of the Gangites* outside the gate.

To this fact is no doubt partly due the more peaceful and steady growth of the church, in the broad spirit of Paul's teaching, when compared with other churches of his founding. And something of this happier experience may also have been due to the character of the native Macedonian element in the city. Mingled with the congenial strength and solidity of the Roman veterans established there, it seems to have produced a tone of society very different from that of the more refined and luxurious cities of Greece.

Renan compares the inhabitants of Macedonia to the healthy independent peasantry of some Protestant country, with nothing of the versatility or levity of the ordinary Greek. In disposition they were serious and gentle,

* This little stream, rising in the hills not far from Philippi, with many others, becomes, lower down the valley, the river Angitas (modern Anghista) before joining the Strymon; unless, indeed, the two forms are but variations of the one name.

with a simplicity and reverence in their religious observances very different from the wild sensualism of some of the Asiatic religions, which in that age had found votaries also further west. It is noted also that in Macedonia the women occupied a position of greater influence and honour than was common among the civilised nations of antiquity. Thus here at Philippi, and also at Thessalonica and Berea, they are mentioned, some of them women of rank, as prominent in connection with the work of the Gospel (*Acts* xvi. 13, xvii. 4, 12 ; *Phil.* iv. 2). Although we are left purely to conjecture in this matter, such a robust and healthy tone in the social condition of that home-loving people must have rendered them peculiarly fitted to accept the new ideal of the Christian life, and to remain steadfast and devoted in their discipleship.

II.

THE FIRST COMING OF PAUL TO PHILIPPI.

NEARLY a hundred years after the battle of Philippi, Paul and his companions entered the city to deliver their message of peace. It was most likely in the year 52 or 53 A.D. The Gospel had no doubt already been preached in Rome by Jewish Christians who had found their way to that great centre and meeting-place of all the nations of the earth. But this was the first time that Paul had set foot in Europe to bear his testimony to the name of Christ. According to the narrative of the Book of Acts, it was in the course of the second missionary journey undertaken by the great Apostle of the Gentiles. He had come with his companions, including Silas or Silvanus

and young Timothy, to Troas. Thence they sailed for Neapolis, and with favourable winds accomplished in two days the voyage, which at a later time on a return voyage took them five (*Acts* xvi. 11, xx. 6).*

Landing at Neapolis, Paul and his little band of fellow-workers would at once take to the Egnatian road, which strikes abruptly up the hillside towards the pass of the Symbolum, being hewn in places out of the solid rock. As they crossed the ridge and descended to the plain of Philippi, and so made their way to the opposite side of the valley, where the city stood, we must not suppose that they were at all moved by the thought of the world-famed battlefield they were approaching, or that the memory of the "noblest Roman of them all" claimed even a passing tribute from their admiration. They were Jews, with other memories of the past; but still more they were Christians, to whom the future and the thoughts of the new life, of which they were the heralds, and the great Chief, of whom they were

* It is at this point, when Paul first came into Troas and crossed over to Philippi, that the personal narrative which seems to be embedded in the latter part of the Book of Acts appears, and as the form of speech in the first person is only taken up again when Paul for the last time leaves Philippi on his way to Jerusalem (*Acts* xx. 5), it is conjectured that this man, whether Luke, "the beloved physician" (*Col.* iv. 14; *Philem.* 24), the reputed author of the whole Book of Acts and of the Third Gospel, or some other, may have belonged to Philippi or the neighbourhood, and by his accounts of the people of Macedonia have largely influenced Paul to take up this new field of labour. It would seem also that he was left behind at Philippi when Paul proceeded on his way, and only joined the Apostle again in order to accompany him on the final journey to Jerusalem, and afterwards to Rome.

ambassadors, threw all memories of past glory into insignificance.

And yet it is not without significance for us, that the city which was witness of the death of Brutus, and with him of the last hope of the great Republic of the ancient world, was the scene also of the first triumph in Europe of the new democracy, the power of the nobler humanity in Christ, for Jew and Greek alike, for bond and free, as it was preached by Paul in the broad spirit of a universal brotherhood.

1. How Paul preached at Philippi.

Arrived at Philippi, they waited, as Paul's custom was, until the Sabbath day, that he might have that quiet opportunity in the hour of worship of speaking first to his own people of the message with which he was charged, concerning the Messiah and the larger hope, that had dawned upon the world.

If the conjecture be correct as to the new companion who had joined them in Troas, and who brought them across to Philippi (see note, p. 8), he would no doubt find them quarters in the city; and he it may have been who guided them on the Sabbath to that place of prayer by the pure waters of the Gangites, where they found certain devout women gathered for worship (*Acts* xvi. 13). As there is no mention of any men, it is possible that there really were no Jews at Philippi, and that these women, such of them as were married, had heathen husbands, and themselves were proselytes, as was not uncommon at that time: that is to say, they were women who had become dissatisfied with their old beliefs and the practices of idolatry in which they had

been brought up, and, coming into contact with the faith of Judaism, had found in it a welcome deliverance from their old manner of life. Without entering into complete fellowship with the Jews under the whole rigour of their law, they were led to acknowledge the one supreme God, and to observe the simpler forms of worship and the plain dictates of the purer morality, which that faith involved. (See Carpenter's *Life in Palestine*, § 36.)

Such a proselyte apparently was Lydia, or the Lydian woman, of Thyatira, "one that worshipped God," who in pursuit of her native trade as "a seller of purple," had settled at Philippi. She, according to the record, was Paul's first convert in Europe. It is not necessary to infer from the narrative of Acts that immediately, on the first hearing of Paul's message, she became a disciple. But she "gave heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul," and her heart was opened, so that the persuasion of his earnestness and his over-mastering faith convinced her of the reality of this new life of which he spoke—the life of faith and spiritual freedom in the power of the risen Lord. And by the rite of baptism, doubtless in that very stream by which she had been used to worship, she was received into the fellowship of Christ, she and her household. Then she begged the Apostle and his companions to take up their abode at her house. So it was that the home of this true-hearted woman, and "the church in her house," became the centre and foundation of the larger church at Philippi (*Acts* xvi. 15).

How many were the "certain days" that they tarried at Philippi we have no means of knowing; but there was time to lay the foundation of a strong and healthy

church. After the first day of their preaching, it would seem that they made it a habit to go out to the accustomed place of prayer, and in that pleasant retreat gathered together the company of the newly-made disciples. Then by the first trouble brought upon the Apostle, not by the Jews, but by Gentile passion, their peaceful work was suddenly interrupted, and they were obliged to leave the city.

2. The Troubles at Philippi.

The dramatic account of this episode, given in the Book of Acts (xvi. 16-40), one would gladly leave as it stands, were it not that a reverence, deeper than any love of the picturesque or the miraculous, compels us to ask how far all the incidents recorded can be accepted as historically true. In the mind of the writer of the narrative, clearly the sudden earthquake, the opening of all the doors, and the loosening of the fetters of the prisoners, were due to a miraculous intervention of God, to liberate the Apostles and to show that in a very special sense they were under his protection. But we have learnt now so to reverence the divine order of the universe, and the working out of human destiny in accordance with unchanging moral and spiritual law, that we feel there is something unreal and incongruous in such supposed miraculous interventions. The stories of marvel grew up in connection with every ancient form of religion, and were eagerly and easily accepted by the people of those days. But now we are thankful to be able to separate such elements from the history with which they are so closely interwoven, and feel that

we are nearer to truth and to God when we picture to ourselves a natural order of events.*

3. *Healing of the Slave Girl.*

It appears that there were in Philippi at that time some men who had a slave girl, supposed to be possessed by a "spirit of divination," which made her able to foretell the future. Among a credulous people this was a source of great gain to her owners. The poor girl was probably suffering from some nervous, hysterical disorder, which affected her mind, so that she imagined herself (unless she was merely an impostor) to be possessed by the wise Python spirit,† and in an unnatural voice she declared the future to those who questioned her, or uttered strange sayings, which were interpreted as oracles. And one day as Paul and his companions were going out to the place of prayer she met them, and turned round to follow, calling after them, "These men are servants of the most high God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation." She must

* In this particular case, apart from the broad question of miracles, and supposing the narrative credible in itself, it is an extraordinary thing that Paul himself in referring to what befell him at Philippi should speak indeed of his sufferings (1 *Thess.* ii. 2; *Phil.* i. 30), but make no allusion to the wonderful deliverance which followed. In the defence of his apostleship (2 *Cor.* xii., xiii.) one would think that so striking an instance of special providence, if historical, would have been alluded to.

† It appears that at that time women so affected were looked upon as prophetesses, inspired by the Pythian Apollo. Hence the name of the "spirit of divination" supposed to be in them. Cp. Farrar's *Paul*, ch. xxv., I., p. 491.

have heard some report of their teaching, and so have been excited to call after them in this way. But when it was repeated many times, whenever she saw them on the road, it became a great trouble to Paul. Therefore one day he turned to face her, and speaking, it would seem, with authority such as a man of great spiritual power often has over the nervously disordered, he commanded the spirit in the name of Christ to come out of her. Then she was quieted, and from that hour returned to her right mind (ver. 18).*

* There seems no sufficient reason for doubting the historical truth of this incident, of which there are so many parallels in the Gospels, and of which similar modern instances can be adduced. Some basis of fact, however imperfectly understood, must surely underlie the record of such occurrences. No erroneous opinion held at the time as to "possession by demons," and the meaning of such works of healing, "the casting out of demons," ought to obscure for us the fact that they were accomplished.

As people suffering from mental derangement are often found now with the strangest fancies that they are some great personage, and constantly speak and act in that character, so it would seem that in those days the unhappy maniacs shared the popular belief that they were possessed by evil spirits, and spoke in the person of the demons. So we find them addressing Jesus, as though they were afraid of his power and were obliged to recognise his authority (see, e.g., *Mark* i. 25, iii. 11, 12; *Luke* iv. 34; *Matt.* viii. 28-33). And he, with the quieting and life-giving influence of his calm and pure spirit, was able to restore the poor sufferers to health.

So also when among spiritual gifts Paul speaks of "healings" and "workings of miracles" (acts of power) (*1 Cor.* xii. 9, 10; *2 Cor.* xii. 12; *Rom.* xv. 18, 19), taking it for granted that they are facts well known in the churches, needing no explanation or apology, it seems evident, that whatever the explanation of such power in Paul himself, and in other of the early disciples, it did actually exist.

And in later times, under very different circumstances, but where

4. *The Owners' Revenge.*

At this the owners of the girl were greatly enraged, since it destroyed their means of gain. And because an accusation on the ground of their real grievance would hardly have been effective, they appealed to the religious prejudices of the magistrates and populace by charging the Apostles as obnoxious Jews, who were introducing customs unlawful to be observed by Romans (ver. 21) Then followed a scene of confusion. The magistrates apparently were carried away by the passionate crowd, and, for fear of greater violence, suffered the prisoners to be scourged without further inquiry, and afterwards to be thrown into prison. That in the tumult raised against them in the market-place Paul made no assertion of his Roman citizenship, to escape illegal violence, should not be regarded as in any way discrediting the narrative. When on another occasion he did so claim the protection of his right (*Acts* xxii. 25), the circumstances were different. There in cold blood he was to be

there has been a similar revival of religious enthusiasm and strong spiritual excitement, phenomena of the same kind have reappeared.

One of the most striking modern instances of this power of a man of great spiritual endowments over the mentally afflicted we have near home, recorded in the Journal of George Fox. It was in the year 1649, after some of his early troubles at Nottingham; and thus Fox writes about it: "Now after I was set at liberty from Nottingham Jail (where I had been kept prisoner a pretty long time), I travelled as before in the work of the Lord. And coming to Mansfield-Woodhouse, there was a distracted woman under a doctor's hand, with her hair loose all about her ears; and he was about to let her blood, she being first bound, and many people being about her, holding her by violence: but he could get no blood from her. And I desired them to unbind her and to let her alone; for they

examined by scourging, and there was time deliberately to consider and to speak to those who would hear. But at Philippi it might well be that in the confusion, amid excited passions, it was of no avail to attempt to speak; or if there had been the opportunity, Paul may have felt it better at the moment not to resist, and to suffer the violence and indignity in silence.

5. Conversion of the Jailor.

The incident of the jailor's conversion gains a far deeper interest for us, and is brought nearer to what we know of the realities of spiritual life, when we are able to think of it as occasioned, not by the terror of an earthquake, or any such startling and unnatural occurrence as the narrative pictures, but simply by the personal influence of the prisoners themselves. A man of ingenuous nature, seeing the patience and dignity of their bearing after such disgraceful punishment, and hearing perhaps their hymn of thanksgiving in the night, might well have been drawn to them, and have been led

could not touch the spirit in her, by which she was tormented: so they did unbind her. And I was moved to speak to her, and in the name of the Lord to bid her, Be quiet and still. And she was so. And the Lord's power settled her mind, and she mended; and afterwards received the truth, and continued in it to her death. And the Lord's name was honoured, to whom the glory of all His works belongs. And many wonderful things were wrought by the Heavenly Power in those days: for the Lord made bare His omnipotent arm, and manifested His power to the astonishment of many; by the healing virtue whereof many have been delivered from great infirmities, and the devils were made subject through His name; of which particular instances might be given, beyond what this unbelieving age is able to receive or bear."

to inquire the reason of their sufferings, and the source of that strength and cheerfulness of spirit which sustained them. And then being touched by their appeal, and seeing that they could not be treated as ordinary criminals, it would be natural that he should take them up out of the dungeon into his own house, within the confines of the prison, and wash their stripes, and with his household, even as Lydia before him, be baptized into the new fellowship of Christ (ver. 33).

The magistrates seem to have been aware that there was no real charge to be sustained against the prisoners, and were only anxious that they should be sent quietly away. And when it was reported to them that the men whom they had so shamefully treated were Roman citizens, their anxiety became serious to have done with so awkward an affair, and to induce the Apostles as soon as possible to leave the city (ver. 39). So it was that Paul and Silas, having returned to Lydia's house, and having given their final exhortations to the brethren, proceeded on their way.

III.

PAUL'S LATER VISITS TO PHILIPPI, AND THE WRITING OF HIS LETTER.

OF Paul's later visits to Philippi we find only the scantiest notice ; but from first to last there was evidently the warmest feeling of sympathy and confidence between him and the members of this first church which he gathered in Europe. There was so little fear of misunderstanding, that with them he did not feel bound to

maintain the strict independence of his position, on which he lays so much stress elsewhere (1 Cor. ix. 7-15; 2 Cor. xi. 7-9; 1 Thess. ii. 6-9; 2 Thess. iii. 8). On the contrary, he was glad to receive their gifts, as ministering to his personal needs and as proof of their affection. Almost directly after he left them they sent gifts "once and again" to Thessalonica, and also while he was in Greece (*Phil.* iv. 15, 16; 2 Cor. xi. 9).

1. *Collections for the Brethren in Judæa.*

Then after his three years' residence at Ephesus, it appears that Paul was again at Philippi in two successive visits, with an interval of three months spent in Greece. At that time he was engaged in gathering up the collections, which the various churches were making for the poor brethren in Judæa, who, owing to disturbances in their unhappy country, were suffering great privations. And then there was an even more immediate and urgent reason for this journey in the grave troubles which had broken out in the church at Corinth. The Book of Acts makes no mention of this, but merely records in the barest way that, after the disturbances at Ephesus in the interest of Diana's craftsmen, Paul "departed for to go into Macedonia. And when he had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece. And when he had spent three months there, and a plot was laid against him by the Jews, as he was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedonia. . . . And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread" (*Acts* xx. 1-6). That would be after Easter in the year 58 or 59.

From the Epistles to the Corinthians further particulars may be gathered. The first epistle had been written from Ephesus, on news arriving of the troubles at Corinth, which made Paul feel it imperative that he should quickly be there in person, to restore order and harmony to the church. At the close of that epistle (ch. xvi.), he mentions that Timothy has been already sent, probably in connection with the business of the collections, and speaks also of his own intention of coming to Corinth by way of Macedonia. From the second epistle we see that this is the course he actually pursued, although, on account of further news from Corinth, he had been strongly impelled to sail directly to that city. But he delayed his visit, as he says (2 Cor. i. 23), to spare them the sharpness of his personal rebuke, and sent at once some message or letter, as it would seem, by the hand of Titus.

Timothy does not appear to have reached Corinth before again joining Paul; for there is no mention of the fact in the second epistle, in the opening greeting of which his name is coupled with Paul's.* This epistle was written from Macedonia, and in all likelihood from Philippi, to which Paul in his anxiety for news from

* Another explanation, however, is that after receipt of news as to the effect of his letter (1 Cor.), Paul did pay a short visit to Corinth, and met Timothy there; and that this having led to an aggravation of the troubles, and personal insult, Paul wrote another very severe letter, concerning which he was so anxious to hear, and so thankful to know that it had been well received, when he wrote again from Philippi (2 Cor.). And it is suggested that 2 Cor. x.-xiii. is the intermediate letter of indignation (or part of it), afterwards incorporated with the final letter of reconciliation. Cp. Pfeiderer's *Urchristenthum*, pp. 103-117 (Berlin: 1887).

Corinth had hastened, and where among his old friends he would find the best comfort until the arrival of Titus (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13, vii. 5-7).

There was then apparently some renewal of the violence which before had driven Paul from Philippi (2 Cor. vii. 5), and from which afterwards also the disciples there were not free (*Phil.* i. 28, 29); and certainly Philippi must be included among "the churches of Macedonia," to whose devotion and liberality even in their deep poverty Paul bears such striking testimony (2 Cor. viii. and ix., esp. viii. 1-5).

Then as he returned from Corinth, Paul lingered again with his Philippians before setting out on that eventful journey to Jerusalem, bearing the gifts of the churches of Greece and Macedonia (2 Cor. viii. 1-4, 10, 11, ix. 1-5; *Rom.* xv. 26). He may well have felt in parting from them that they would see his face no more; and in spite of the expectation expressed in *Phil.* i. 25, that foreboding seems to have been realised.*

2. Final Intercourse with Philippi.

After this parting there is no record of any communication between the Apostle and his friends until in the year 61 or 62 the news reached Philippi that Paul, after

* The question of the authenticity of the Epistles to Timothy cannot be here discussed. The traditional view of the concluding years of Paul's life supposes that he was twice imprisoned at Rome, and not until 67 A.D. suffered martyrdom there at the same time as Peter, while in the interval of freedom he wrote those epistles, and also paid one or two more visits to Philippi. In our view Paul was liberated only by death from his first imprisonment, and consequently did not again visit Philippi after he set sail for Syria in 58 or 59 A.D.

his long confinement at Cæsarea and his final appeal to Cæsar, had been taken as a prisoner to Rome. Then at once in their warm-hearted generosity they sent Epaphroditus, one of their number (*Phil.* ii. 25-30, iv. 18), with gifts to aid and cheer him in his trouble, and as a token of their unchanging affection:

Their messenger, being come to Rome, was encouraged by the fortitude of the Apostle, and kindled to fresh enthusiasm by the triumphant faith of this "prisoner in the Lord," and so threw himself heart and soul into the work of the Gospel in the great city, in company with the other brethren who were "more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear" (*Phil.* i. 14). But in his zeal Epaphroditus overtaxed his strength, and, falling ill, was brought near to death (*Phil.* ii. 27, 30). News of his danger reached Philippi, and the knowledge that his friends there would be anxious and troubled about him added to the longing of Epaphroditus to be home again. Therefore, as soon as he was strong enough to bear the long journey, Paul sent him back to the Philippians, that they might be reassured by the sight of their messenger returned in safety, and he (Paul) might himself also rejoice in their joy (*Phil.* ii. 26-28).

With Epaphroditus Paul sent his thanks to the church at Philippi for their gifts, and news of his own condition at Rome, and took the opportunity of writing to them the apostolic letter, which is happily preserved to us. After its despatch we find no certain record of how it fared with Paul. But from the tone and contents of the letter we see with what noble courage and triumph of spirit the great Apostle

endured his bonds, and already looked beyond the gates of death.*

IV.

PAUL AS A PRISONER IN ROME.†

ALL that we know of Paul during his imprisonment in Rome is derived from his own letters, and what may be inferred from the condition of the city and the events which occurred at that time. How the imprisonment ended will probably never be known with any certainty. The Book of Acts merely states that Paul remained in Rome "two whole years in his own hired dwelling,"

* Of the later history of the church at Philippi hardly anything is known. At the beginning of the second century, Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, according to the received tradition, passed through the city as a prisoner, on his way to martyrdom at Rome, and there is a letter to the Philippians purporting to have been written by Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, in answer to a letter of the Philippians, referring to that martyrdom, and exhorting them to be true to the teaching of the Apostle, who in his letter had spoken so highly of them.

After that time there is no record, except that the name of a bishop of Philippi occasionally appears with others in connection with various ecclesiastical councils.

We do not know when the city was destroyed. The one great monument of the church at Philippi is the letter which Paul wrote to them, and which keeps fresh for all time the memory of their generous love and faithfulness.

† See Lightfoot, *Philippians, Introduction*, i.; Dean Merivale, *St. Paul at Rome* (S.P.C.K.); Farrar, *St. Paul*, chs. xlv.-xlvii.; Renan, *L'Antechrist*, ch. i.; *Bible for Young People*, vol. vi., ch. xi.; Conybeare and Howson, *St. Paul*, chs. xxiv.-xxvi.; *Onesimus*, by the author of *Philochristus*, bks. v.-vii.

and so comes to a somewhat abrupt conclusion. It gives no further information as to what happened at the end of that time; and there is no other record that can be relied upon. But the great fire of Rome, in July 64, and the subsequent cruel outbreak of the Emperor against the Christians, mark in all likelihood the term both of the imprisonment and the life of the Apostle (cp. note, p. 19).

Our lack of knowledge as to the outward order of events is, however, of little consequence when compared with the value of what we do possess, in the picture which Paul has left us in his letters of himself and the spirit in which he endured his imprisonment.

1. The Jews in Rome.

Some years before Paul himself came to Rome, we know that there was a considerable Christian church there, to which he addressed his letter from Corinth. At that time it was composed of both Jewish and Gentile converts, the Gentiles being perhaps already in the majority. But its origin was doubtless among the Jews, who occupied a quarter of their own across the Tiber. Since their first establishment there (after Pompey's entry into Jerusalem in 63 B.C.), they had increased very greatly in numbers, and, as their custom was, made their influence felt in the city much more than the ruling classes liked. They had several synagogues, and made not a few proselytes among the wealthier Romans, rousing against themselves in consequence proportionate jealousy and dislike.

They were a people turbulent in temper, easily excited by any impostor, or even the report that their

expected Messiah had appeared, so that more than once tumults occurred, such as that after which (in 53 A.D.) the Emperor Claudius banished the Jews from the city (cp. *Acts* xviii. 2). The historian Suetonius, in his life of Claudius, states that this tumult was aroused "*at the instigation of Chrestus*." The names Chrestus and Christus were frequently confused by the early heathen writers, and most probably the disturbance was due to some rumour among the people as to the Messiah. But already at that time disciples may have come over from Judæa, and have declared to their brethren Jesus as the Christ, so that they also may have been involved in this trouble. It has been suggested that Aquila and Priscilla, when they came to Corinth and met Paul there, were already Christians (*Acts* xviii. 2-4).

Whatever the immediate effect of the decree of Claudius, neither Jews nor Christians were to be permanently banished from the city. The new Christian church undoubtedly flourished, and when Paul was brought to Rome the brethren came to meet him on the way, so that he, seeing them, "thanked God and took courage" (*Acts* xxviii. 15).

2. Paul's Arrival in the City.

It was in the early spring, probably of the year 61, when Paul was led into the city in company with other prisoners, and the Roman soldiers in charge. He had hoped to come as a free man, himself a citizen, and to preach openly in the synagogues of his own people, or elsewhere as he found opportunity. He had written to the brethren from Corinth of his earnest desire to come, that he might have "some fruit" in them also, and he

and they might be mutually strengthened and comforted in their faith (*Rom.* i. 11-13).

But now, through his appeal to Cæsar, he was not at liberty to choose his own time or opportunity. He was indeed in Rome; but he can have seen little of the city, for he would be led straight to the headquarters of the Prætorian Guard, and as an imperial prisoner be delivered into the custody of the Præfect, the commanding officer,* to await the hearing of his appeal. How effectively he did, nevertheless, fulfil his mission as an "ambassador of Christ" will be seen from reading the epistle.

The place of his imprisonment is uncertain. A detachment of the Prætorian Guard was always on duty at the Emperor's palace, and by some it is supposed that Paul was kept in the soldiers' quarters there (cp. note on i. 13). But more probably it is in the great camp of the Prætorians on the north-east of the city, without the walls, or in the near neighbourhood of the camp, that we must picture to ourselves Paul's "hired dwelling." From the statement of the Book of Acts,

* The Præfect at this time was Afranius Burrus, a man of sterling character, and the friend of the philosopher Seneca. But there is no reason for supposing that Paul was brought into any real personal contact with either of these men. He and Seneca were, strictly speaking, contemporaries, and may have met in Rome. But it is not likely that any nearer understanding resulted than from that other encounter at Corinth, when Paul was brought before the judgment-seat of Gallio, Seneca's brother (*Acts* xviii. 12-17). For the resemblance and contrast between Paul's teaching and the Stoic philosophy of Seneca, see the elaborate essay in Lightfoot's *Philippians*; Farrar's *Seekers after God* (Macmillan's Sunday Library); and C. Aubertin's *Étude critique sur les rapports supposés entre Sénèque et Saint Paul* (Paris: 1857).

if we may rely upon it, it appears that the confinement of the Apostle was not (at least in the beginning) of the most rigorous sort. In such a room he could receive his friends, his personal companions might be always near him, and he had liberty to write, and probably to speak to any company that might gather about him.

Yet we must not think too lightly of his "bonds." Day and night he was constantly attached by a chain to the soldier appointed to guard him; and his freedom of conduct and intercourse must have depended very largely on the temper of his companion.

Then if he was brought to any formal trial, and the case went against him, he may very likely have been subjected to much severer treatment. But here we touch the limit of our knowledge, and must be content to remember that whatever did befall him, he had learnt in whatsoever state he was therein to be content (iv. 11), and that nothing could now dismay or darken the triumphant joy of his spirit.

From the Epistle to Philemon we know one incident that befell; and the coming of Epaphroditus was another. Then there was Paul's constant interest in the churches at a distance, and his eagerness over the work in Rome. His "fellow-workers" came and went—Timothy, Luke, and the rest. Their world was great and full of hope, in the light of their faith, although outwardly in that vast city the results of their labours may have appeared insignificant.

3. Condition of Rome at that Time.

Rome at that time had an enormous population, estimated by careful historians at over two millions,

scattered over an area of many square miles. As the chief city of the world and the centre of imperial power, it was gathering to itself all the splendour and dignity attaching to its rank. But not only the pride of empire was established there, and the luxury of wealth, and the shameless vice of a corrupt and profligate society. In that vast population was also to be found in its intensest form the squalor and wretchedness with which we are too familiar in our own great cities. Of those two million people a large proportion, not improbably the half, were slaves of various degrees, from the common drudge to the skilled artisan, and even the cultured linguist or musician. But far more wretched, at least in their material condition, were the poorest of the free men, citizens or strangers, who were herded together in the lowest parts of the city with no means of subsistence except crime or the largess of the wealthy. All the refuse of the world seemed to drift into that huge receptacle. Humanity was there in its worst and most hopeless condition. In themselves the people had no strength to rise out of the gross darkness and the foul, poisoned atmosphere of their moral and spiritual death. There must come some purifying and redeeming power from above to bring them the message of hope and new life. Nor was it the poor alone who were in this sore need. The wealth and culture of the old world, as they had now come to be dissociated from any living faith, were equally powerless to satisfy or ennoble life. Only a few of the wisest so much as sought for deliverance in the cold isolation of Stoic pride and aloofness from the follies and vices of mankind.

4. *The Emperor.*

The master of that city, and of the whole empire, was Nero, the infamous, fifth Emperor of Rome, at that time (61 A.D.) a young man of twenty-four. He was only seventeen when the death of Claudius lifted him to that fatal eminence, and the first years of his reign were prosperous and happy. But now he was breaking loose from the restraining influence of Seneca, the Stoic philosopher, who had been his tutor, and his other better genius, the Præfect Burrus, and was rapidly developing that insanity of passion which has made his reign one of the darkest blots upon the history of the latter heathen times. He had already caused his mother to be put to death, and shortly afterwards put away his wife. In the spring of 62, Burrus died by his order, and Seneca's power was at an end. And then for six years there was this spectacle of preposterous vanity in the slave of vilest passions, criminal and loathsome, lifted to the seat of empire, decked in purple, the strangest monument of the irony of fate, in so marking the greatness of a worldly power that had lost the strength and integrity of its earlier manhood.

5. *The Great Fire.*

There was very strong suspicion that the great fire of Rome, A.D. 64, which destroyed many venerable but not imposing relics of an earlier time, and cleared the ground for more magnificent buildings, had been kindled by the Emperor's command.

"In order to stifle this suspicion, Nero accused and exposed to special torments certain wicked and detestable

people who were commonly styled Christians. They derived their name from a certain Christus, who had suffered death under Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius; but their abominable superstition, though checked for a time, was breaking forth again, and spreading not only over Judæa, where it had its origin, but through the city, whither everything atrocious and shameless comes together and is practised openly. Some people were at once arrested, and on their confession and testimony a great number of others were convicted, not so much on the charge of the burning as of their hatred of mankind in general.* These were put to death, and mockery was added to their sufferings; for some were sewn up in beasts' skins and torn in pieces by dogs, others were fastened to crosses and set on fire to give light at night. Nero threw his own gardens open for the spectacle, and held chariot races on the occasion, mingling with the mob in the garb of a driver, or himself driving. Culprits they might be, and worthy of extreme punishments; nevertheless, the people could not help pitying them, as condemned for no public advantage, but to gratify the cruelty of a single individual" (Tacitus, *Annals*, xv. 44).

The man who could take pleasure in such things was

* Such the early Christians appeared to their contemporaries among the cultured heathen, who had no knowledge of their inner life. Their exclusive meetings for worship and communion gave rise to various false and scandalous reports as to their secret practices, which were accepted without further inquiry by the historian. The fact that they absented themselves from the public spectacles of the theatre, and withdrew very largely from all public service, and refused especially to serve any longer in the army, was the ground for the strange opinion as to their "hatred of mankind."

the Cæsar, to whom Paul had appealed. If the cruel mockery of those scenes witnessed also the Apostle's death, it does but bring out in more striking contrast the wretched infamy of the persecutor, and the fearless courage and noble dignity of the sufferer.

But apart from these last lurid scenes, it is with infinite relief that we turn away from the foul orgies of the palace, to think of this humble prisoner who can speak to us of things lovely and pure and true, who will show us how even in that sink of iniquity the purifying touch of Christ was making itself felt. For even in "Cæsar's household" there were some (though as yet perhaps only humble slaves) who had learnt the secret of the new life.

V.

THE CHARACTER AND CONTENTS OF THE LETTER.

THE letter to the Philippians has a peculiar interest as belonging to the time of the Roman imprisonment, when Paul's long and arduous ministry was drawing to a close. It tells us nothing of the political events of that day. It is not touched by the foulness of the city or of the palace; for its writer, though a prisoner in chains, breathes a different air. We are brought into the presence of a man brave and faithful, a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The letter is a beautiful memorial of the power of the Christian faith in those early days, and of that personal allegiance to Christ, which for so long was the inspiration of Paul's life and work. We see his joy in the new life, the deeper conviction of

truth, the fuller satisfaction and peace which he had found, quickened to that spirit of sonship which was manifest in Christ, and which opened to the disciples the glorious inheritance of the children of God. We see him not only possessing in his own heart these great treasures, the knowledge of the Father's love and compassion, the freedom of the spirit in the faith and love of Christ, and the great hope of the life to come, but giving himself in the service of this gospel, finding his own true life in sharing its blessedness with others. His first and constant care is that in all the churches which he has gathered, and wherever he can bear his testimony, there may be the same joy and fulness of life, and the same pressing forward to the perfecting of that life which is hid with Christ in God.

The immediate occasion of his writing, and the special personal details, hold only a secondary place in the letter, and are absorbed in his larger purpose.

1. What Paul thinks of the Philippians.

Paul's relations with these Philippians, as we have seen (p. 16, and especially the notes on iv. 10-18), had always been of the closest and most affectionate kind. He and they had suffered together for the truth (i. 28-30), but they had never caused him grievous pain and disappointment as the Galatians had done. He knows the strong and healthy spirit that unites them in the common life of their church. Epaphroditus has told him much of their welfare since he last was with them, and of their continued earnestness in good works; and now he has to acknowledge a fresh token of their frank and generous disposition and their goodwill towards himself.

In his imprisonment he delights to think of them and to draw more closely to himself the bonds of their affection and their fellowship with him in the Gospel. The letter throughout is dominated by a tone of joy, overflowing with his love for them; it is full of the triumph of his own faith, though in prison and in the face of death, and of confidence in them, that they will be steadfast, and through the great mercy of God will be kept in the true way, which is life and peace (i. 6, iv. 7, 9).

2. The Need of Warning.

But he knows that there is need of warning and exhortation, not against any vital errors of doctrine that would overturn their faith and destroy the very foundations of their new life, but against faults of personal temper or character in some of the members, which he has learnt are seriously threatening the peace of their society. They may have been faults of too eager zeal, the jealousy which sometimes springs even out of emulation in good works and progress in piety, or perhaps of too great self-assertion and insistence on individual opinions and tastes and special methods of work, without due regard to the feelings of others and the general consensus of opinion in the church. In any case it is evident that in some of the members there was need of more self-repression, in view of the larger unity of their society, and of willing service, in perhaps distasteful ways, for the common good (ii. 2-4, iv. 2, 3).

And so Paul writes with this object constantly in view, to strengthen them in the unity of the one true spirit, in the sense of their high calling as a Christian church, as fellow-workers with him in the Gospel.

Once he appeals directly by name to two women of the church to forget their differences and "be of the same mind in the Lord" (iv. 2); and throughout the epistle, with varying emphasis, one can trace this ruling purpose to confirm in them the spirit of fellowship and self-renouncing love, and to make them feel how much he cares that they as a church shall remain true to the ideal of the Christian life.

3. Purport of the Letter.

Thus after the opening greeting Paul speaks at once of his thankfulness and confidence in them all, not hinting at any fault or trouble, but emphasising the expression of his affection for them all, and remembering how they all have helped in the progress of the Gospel. And his prayer is that their "love may abound yet more and more," for that alone can keep them pure and without offence to the end (i. 4-7). Then, after telling them of the happy issue of his imprisonment in Rome, whether it is finally to end for himself in life or death, he turns this also to account for the fresh kindling of their zeal in fellowship with him, in steadfastness and unity (i. 19, 25-27); and, further (in ii. 1-18), he exhorts to unity, lowliness of mind and unselfishness, putting before them the supreme example of Christ himself. Thus he shows them the true secret of the diviner life, and the spirit by which alone they can advance in godliness and be kept blameless and harmless in a crooked and perverse generation (ii. 15).

The warning of iii. 2 (see the notes) is generally interpreted not as implying any special danger from Judaisers at Philippi, but as being suggested by some

fresh instance of their enmity and factiousness at Rome, or perhaps as being only a repetition of warnings which formerly Paul had given to the Philippians in the course of his instructions, in order to make clear to them his own position and the nature of the true righteousness of the disciple and of the spiritual life. Here, again, iii. 8-11, as in ii. 21, the thought of the new life, which is "Christ formed in the heart," points to self-renunciation, and consequent unity in the spirit. And the exhortation of iii. 20, 21, to be mindful of their heavenly citizenship, though following on the warning against grosser evils, makes in the same direction. Then follows the direct appeal of iv. 2, 3, and the further noble exhortations, iv. 4-9, which set forth the true ideal of the Christian temper; while even in the closing passage, acknowledging their gifts, Paul brings out again the thought of their close fellowship with him, their union in love and deeds of generosity, which should lift them above any littleness of personal jealousy or dissension.

This one ruling purpose gives unity to the letter, which otherwise is one of the least formal of the Apostle's writings which have come down to us. Its great charm, together with the pervading joyousness of tone, is its unconstrained freedom of expression, and its richness in the glimpses that it furnishes of the man himself, writing as a friend to his friends.

4. Lightfoot's Concluding Remarks.

On the general character of the letter Dr. Lightfoot has some very suggestive remarks, with which this Introduction may fitly close:

"The Epistle to the Philippians is not only the noblest

reflection of Paul's personal character and spiritual illumination, his large sympathies, his womanly tenderness, his delicate courtesy, his frank independence, his entire devotion to the Master's service ; but as a monument of the power of the Gospel it yields in importance to none of the apostolic writings. Scarcely thirty years have passed since one Jesus was crucified as a malefactor in a remote province of the empire ; scarcely ten since one Paul, a Jew of Tarsus, first told at Philippi the story of His cruel death ; and what is the result ? Imagine one, to whom the name of Christ had been hitherto a name only, led by circumstances to study this touching picture of the relations between St. Paul, his fellow-labourers, his converts ; and pausing to ask himself what unseen power had produced these marvellous results. Stronger than any associations of time or place, of race or profession, stronger than the instinctive sympathies of common interest or the natural ties of blood-relationship, a mysterious bond unites St. Paul, Epaphroditus, the Philippian converts ; them to the Apostle, and him to them, and each to the other. In this threefold cord of love the strands are so intertwined and knotted together, that the writer cannot conceive of them as disentangled. The joy of one must be the joy of all ; the sorrow of one must be the sorrow of all.

"The Apostle's language furnishes the reply to such a questioner. This unseen power is the 'power of Christ's resurrection' (iii. 10). This mutual love is diffused from 'the heart of Christ Jesus' (i. 8), beating with His pulses and living by His life. When the contemporary heathen remarked how 'these Christians loved one another,' he felt that he was confronted by

an unsolved enigma. The power, which wrought the miracle, was hidden from him. It was no new commandment indeed, for it appealed to the oldest and truest impulses of the human heart. And yet it was a new commandment; for in Christ's life and death and resurrection it had found not only an example and a sanction, but a power, a vitality, wholly unfelt and unknown before.

"To all ages of the Church—to our own especially—this epistle reads a great lesson. While we are expending our strength on theological definitions or ecclesiastical rules, it recalls us from these distractions to the very heart and centre of the Gospel—the life of Christ and the life in Christ. Here is the meeting-point of all our differences, the healing of all our feuds, the true life alike of individuals and sects and churches: here doctrine and practice are wedded together; for here is the 'Creed of creeds' involved in and arising out of the Work of works" (*Introduction*, § 4).

"And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the Creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought."

CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

- i. 1, 2.—The greeting.
 - 3-8.—Expression of thankfulness and confidence in the Philippians.
 - 9-11.—Prayer for their perseverance.
 - 12-26.—Paul's account of the progress of the Gospel, and his own condition as a prisoner at Rome.
 - 27-30.—Exhortation to the Philippians to stand fast.
- ii. 1-18.—Further exhortations, especially to humility and unselfish love, after the great example of Christ.
 - 19-30.—Paul's intention as to sending Timothy to Philippi, and the reference to Epaphroditus, their messenger, who is to carry back this letter.
- iii. 1-16.—Warning against false Judaizing teachers, and the testimony of his own life-experience as showing the true method and aim of Christian discipleship.
 - 17-21.—Warning against lawless sensualism, and an appeal to their heavenly citizenship.
- iv. 1-7.—Further exhortations to steadfastness, unity and a joyful spirit.
 - 8, 9.—Final comprehensive exhortation as to Christian character.
 - 10-20.—Paul's gratitude for the gifts of the Philippians, and record of their intimate relations.
 - 21-23.—Final salutations and benediction.

COMMENTARY.

I. 1, 2. THE GREETING.

THE address or opening greeting of Paul's letters is never a matter of form. It expresses the greatness and seriousness of his purpose in writing. Whatever may be the special occasion of the letter, it is always in the service of Christ that he writes to the different churches, as a man burdened with a message and quickened by the new spirit of life.

In the very words of his address he reminds them of the fellowship into which they have been called as Christian disciples, and wishes them the blessing which the perfecting of that fellowship must bring.

In our modern letters, when they are not merely formal, we use a term of endearment, which shows that it is a friend writing to a friend. In these greater letters of Paul it is the same, only the thought of friendship is charged with all the fulness of what it means to those who have just entered into the new life of Christian faith, and look upon all things in the diviner light which has dawned for them. It is so in the least formal of Paul's letters, and no less when he writes in sorrow and displeasure, as to the Galatians. The most elaborate address is that in the Epistle to the Romans, in which he wrote to a church not yet personally known to him, with the express purpose of putting before them a clear

statement of the whole meaning of the Christian Gospel. To the Philippians the address is short, as to old and intimate friends, who would understand much in few words.

Paul and Timothy. So in other letters in the opening greeting Paul couples with his own the names of companions who are with him, as a token of the wider fellowship in the church, and the interest of the others in the welfare of those who are addressed. And at the end of the letters also the others send messages. But, apart from that, Paul writes in his own person; and in this case when Timothy is again mentioned it is in the third person.

The same companionship in the opening greeting we find in *2 Cor.*, *Col.* and *Philem.* So also in *Thess.*, with Silvanus added. In *1 Cor.* it is Paul and Sosthenes, for Timothy was absent, most likely in Macedonia. In *Gal.* it is Paul and "all the brethren who are with him." Timothy seems to have been Paul's closest companion at this time (ii. 22). He was a man well known to the Philippians, from the time of Paul's first preaching in their city (Introd., p. 8).

Servants of Jesus Christ. Bond-servants, slaves. So also *Rom.* i. 1; *Gal.* i. 10. They were given up to the service of Christ; they lived now only to do his work in the world. That service is perfect freedom (*Gal.* v. 1, 13; *1 Cor.* vii. 22; *2 Cor.* iii. 17). They are also ambassadors on behalf of Christ (*2 Cor.* v. 20). Elsewhere Paul speaks of the disciples as servants of righteousness and of God (*Rom.* vi. 18, 22). As in Christ the truth and righteousness and love of God were revealed to them, the one service and discipleship included equally their

relations to God and to his Christ. Writing to Philemon, Paul speaks of himself as "a prisoner of Christ Jesus." In other letters, where he desires to speak with special weight of authority, the address includes a distinct avowal of his apostleship.

Saints in Christ Jesus. This address includes all the members of the church at Philippi. The idea in the term *saints* is of consecration rather than accomplished sanctification or perfection. As under the old dispensation the Israelites were spoken of as a holy people, consecrated to God, so among the Christians all who were baptized and so received into the church were "called to be saints." Such were the Corinthians with all their faults, as well as the Romans and these Philippians (*Rom.* i. 7 ; *1 Cor.* i. 2, vii. 14). Paul himself is the great example in the New Testament of a "saint in Christ Jesus," and he knows that he is not yet perfect (*i.* 21, iii. 8-11 ; *Gal.* ii. 20). In later usage "the saints," "God's people," etc., especially among the Puritans and in various "evangelical" circles, have meant those who are held to be true believers, under the conception which looked upon the church as a "congregation of faithful men," *i.e.*, "men who held the right faith." The modern parallel in such a phrase as "Christian brethren," applied to a miscellaneous or an indifferent congregation, similarly implies, when sincerely used, what is expected of the people, the standard of their duty, rather than the measure of their attainment.

With the bishops and deacons. These were the chief officers of the church at Philippi, and are separately mentioned by way of distinction, or perhaps because they had been instrumental in procuring and sending

the gifts of the church to Paul. The "bishops" must not be thought of as anything like the great dignitaries of our English Church; it is evident that there was more than one in the single church or congregation at Philippi at that time; and from other references in the New Testament to what is expected of bishops or elders, it seems that they were at first not so much ministers of religion in the special sense (like the apostles and prophets), as the guardians of order and the chief managers of the affairs of the churches. And then the deacons were subordinate officers working under them.*

The word *bishop* is really the same as the Greek word *episcopos*, for which it stands. It means literally an *overseer*, and was in common use among the Greeks as an official title in various connections, as, *e.g.*, at Athens for the commissioners who had to regulate a new colony. It is also frequently found in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament made at Alexandria some time in the third and second centuries B.C.), applied to various persons in authority (2 *Kings* xi. 19; 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 12, 17; *Isa.* lx. 17; *Neh.* xi. 9, 14, 22). In the New Testament it is now generally acknowledged that the term is used interchangeably with *presbyter* or *elder* (cp. senator, alderman), and there seems to be no distinction made between the

* See Hatch's *Bampton Lectures* (1880), on *The Organisation of the Early Christian Churches*; and *The Expositor* (1887), Third Series, vol. v., especially the papers by Professor Sanday. Also Lightfoot's *Philippians*, the detached note on "the Synonymes *bishop* and *presbyter*," and the elaborate dissertation on "The Christian Ministry."

bishops and presbyters. See *Acts* xx. 17, 28; 1 *Peter* v. 1, 2, "exercising oversight," i.e., "fulfilling the office of bishops;" 1 *Tim.* iii. 1-7, 8-13, where the offices of bishop and deacon are described, and there is no hint of any intermediate office of presbyter or elder; while in v. 17-22 elders are spoken of, and must be the same as the bishops of the earlier passage. So also in *Titus* i. 5-9.

The use of the term "presbyter" or "elder" for the chief men in the newly formed Christian societies is a parallel to the usage both in heathen guilds or religious associations common at that time, and in Jewish communities, both in their own country and in their settlements in the great cities of the world. Wherever there was a synagogue, there was a council of elders, who were not ministers of religion, but rather civil officers, charged with the care of *discipline* in the community. It was therefore quite natural that this term, as well as "bishop" or "overseer," should be used of the chief officers in the first Christian churches.

The word *deacon* means *servant* or *minister*. It came to be applied in the early church to officers who had charge of administering relief (under the direction, it would seem, of the overseers) to the poor, the sick, and strangers. The seven who are set apart in *Acts* vi. perform such services, but are not called deacons. One of them is Philip, "the evangelist" (*Acts* xxi. 8). Women also shared in this work (*Rom.* xvi. 1; 1 *Tim.* iii. 11).

The distinctions of rank among those who served the churches in those early days were by no means so clearly defined, so far as we can see, as they afterwards became. When Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, he speaks of apostles, prophets and teachers, as first among

the servants of the church (1 Cor. xii. 5, 28-30, xiv. ; Rom. xii. 6-8), and in the Epistle to the Ephesians the church is spoken of as built "upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. ii. 20 ; cp. also iv. 11).

In *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, which most likely belongs to the first half of the second century, the apostles, prophets and teachers clearly hold the most prominent place in the church ; while the writer pleads for the bishops and deacons, as though they did not habitually receive such honour, and seems to imply that they are beginning to take the place of the prophets and teachers in the public services of the church.

It would therefore appear that at first the chief *ministers* in the churches were those with special spiritual gifts, who were not generally attached to any one church ; but, like Paul and Barnabas and Silas and Apollos, went from place to place, as apostles or prophets or teachers, confirming the churches in their faith ; while the bishops or elders and deacons were men remaining in their own churches, chosen at first for the practical work of receiving and distributing the alms of the church and caring for its discipline. Such officers might also have spiritual gifts, and be prophets or teachers as well ; but that would be exceptional, and at any rate does not seem to have been essential to their office.

But afterwards, when the missionary apostles and prophets were no longer there, and the churches settled down into more permanent institutions, their regularly appointed officers would have to undertake the spiritual functions of the ministry as a regular part of their work. And so it came about by gradual development that the presbyters and deacons took rank as regular ministers

in the church ; while from among the presbyters one was chosen to hold the chief rank as bishop, the supreme authority in matters both of doctrine and discipline. The presbyter afterwards became the priest, in accordance with the sacramental theory of religion.

The exaltation of the bishop to his solitary place of dominion in the church was the work of time. In the epistle of Clement of Rome at the end of the first century, bishop and presbyter are still the same. But in the epistles which bear the name of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, and, according to different opinions as to their origin, fall either early or late in the second century, the bishop is already distinctly separated from the presbyters, and exalted in an extraordinary manner to a place of supreme authority in the church. "Be ye zealous to do all things in godly concord, the bishop presiding after the likeness of God, and the presbyters after the likeness of the councils of the apostles" (*Epistle to the Magnesians*). "We ought to regard the bishop as the Lord Himself" (*Epistle to the Ephesians*). "I am devoted to such as are subject to the bishop, the presbyters and the deacons" (*Epistle to Polycarp*). In the epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, however, which in its extant form at any rate must be later than the Ignatian epistles, there is reference only to elders and deacons, so that the three-fold division of the chief ministers of the church was not yet universally accepted.

In later catholic times the theory as to the bishops was not quite so exalted as in the Ignatian epistles. As the supreme rulers of the church on earth, they were said to be not in the place of Christ or God, but of the Apostles.

i. 2. Grace to you and peace from God our Father

and the Lord Jesus Christ. This was Paul's constant wish for the churches, repeated in much the same words at the beginning of all his letters, and so also at the end : "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." It expresses the desire of the Apostle that they should be confirmed in their Christian discipleship.

Grace. The word so translated has various meanings in Greek. The chief are (1) outward grace, loveliness of person ; (2) favour, graciousness, kindness, goodwill ; (3) thanks, thankfulness at receiving favour ; (4) a favour, a kindness done. In this last meaning Paul uses the word when he speaks of the gifts of the Corinthian and again of the Macedonian churches to the brethren in Judæa (1 *Cor.* xvi. 3 ; 2 *Cor.* viii. 4). But most often with him the word bears the second meaning, at whatever point he touches upon the circle of the deeper life, whether at its source in God, its revealing in Christ, or its growth in the disciples. Grace is the lovingkindness, the goodwill of God, the Father in heaven, which calls men to enter into their inheritance as his children, setting them free from the bondage of fear, making their life beautiful and full of blessing. It is also the gracious influence and spiritual power of Jesus Christ, the chief instrument and revealer of the love of God (1 *Cor.* i. 4 ; *Rom.* i. 5, v. 2, 15, 21 ; *Gal.* i. 6). And it is the condition of the disciples, who have learnt of him the blessedness of the childlike spirit, and in the new faith are gathered into the churches, looking for the perfect coming of the kingdom of the Christ (*Rom.* viii. 15, etc., vi. 14 ; 2 *Cor.* xii. 9 ; *Gal.* v. 4 ; *Phil.* i. 7).

Peace is the natural "fruit of the spirit" to those who have received of the grace of God (cp. *Gal.* v. 22).

The Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek word translated *Lord* means one who has power and authority. It is constantly used in the supreme sense: "the Lord God Almighty," "Lord of heaven and earth." And then by the Christian disciples it was used in speaking of the Christ, the anointed One of God, the chosen Revealer of divine truth. While Jesus was with his disciples on earth, they may have addressed him more often as Master, *Rabbi*; but when afterwards they thought of him as risen from the dead, and glorified in heaven, the term Lord would be more fitting. This was how Paul from the first thought of Christ. It was the starting-point of his own faith and the foundation of his teaching that Jesus, who had been crucified, was in fact the Messiah, the Christ of God; that God had raised him from the dead, and given him power and authority to gather men into a new spiritual kingdom (1 Cor. xv. 20-28). To him Christ was "the Son of God with power" (Rom. i. 4); "the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 18); "a life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45). He preaches "Christ crucified;" "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 23, 24). He preaches "Christ Jesus as Lord" (2 Cor. iv. 5). And the first essential of discipleship is faith in this Christ, the Lord, the life-giving Spirit, the Revealer to the world of the spirit of sonship, whereby we may cry to God as our Father. Having that faith, a man becomes "in Christ a new creature" (2 Cor v. 17). He has the true spirit of life, as a child of God (Rom. viii. 16, 17).

This being so, it becomes possible for Paul to wish grace and peace for the disciples "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," from the Supreme Fountain

of all true life, and the chosen Messenger of his mercy. Dr. Vaughan affirms that in such expressions as this we have "an incidental and oft-recurring testimony of the deepest kind to the true divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. It would be as much insanity as blasphemy to wish grace and peace from God and—a *man*." But that is not the true alternative. The Christ certainly did not hold in Paul's view the position of what is somewhat faithlessly called "a *mere* man," but neither was he regarded as God (cp. 1 Cor. iii. 23, viii. 6, xv. 24-28; Rom. viii. 3, 29; and the note on the passage ii. 5-11).

He was *the Christ*, the Messiah, who in the popular Jewish belief of that time was to be the agent of a marvellous renovation of the world, and therefore even if a man no "*mere* man," but endowed with transcendent power and authority. He was to appear among men as a glorious king, to fulfil the purposes of the divine justice and sovereign will (cp. Carpenter's *Life in Palestine*, ch. vi., esp. § 44). And to Paul with his deeper spiritual insight into what was needed for the true renovation of the world, his wider conception of the order of divine providence, Christ was the Lord, not only as one who was to have dominion in the earth at his second coming in glory (cp. ver. 6, note), but as a present quickener of the inward life of the disciples, taking possession of the heart of the believer and making him truly "a new creature," fitting him for the coming kingdom. "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and

gave himself up for me" (*Gal.* ii. 20. But see also the note on ii. 13).

Thus Paul is simply being true to his own experience, not exalting Christ as though he were the supreme God, but confessing his life-giving influence as the Revealer of the deeper spiritual truth and the "great Chief of faithful souls," when he wishes for his friends also grace and peace not only from God our Father, but also *from the Lord Jesus Christ*. And throughout the epistle we see how deeply wrought into the Apostle's life was that spiritual fellowship with the Christ; his compassion, his trust, his hope, his joy, are all "*in the Lord*," and his very life "is Christ" (cp. i. 8, 11, 14, 20, 21, ii. 11, 19, 24, iii. 1, 8, 9, 12, 14, 20, iv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 21, 23).

I. 3-8. EXPRESSION OF THANKFULNESS AND CONFIDENCE IN THE PHILIPPIANS.

THE first word of most of the epistles, after the opening greeting, is an expression of thankfulness for the faith of the disciples and the progress of the Gospel. 1 *Thess.* is nearest to our epistle in the unconstrained gladness with which Paul writes. Only in *Gal.* is it altogether different. There the sharpness of the Apostle's disappointment and displeasure leaves no room at the outset for any other feeling.

i. 3, 4. "Whenever I think of you, it is with thankfulness. I have no thought of you that is not overflowing with gratitude. When I pray for you, it is always with joy." The sentence is fully charged with the abundant force of his emotion.

I thank my God (cp. iii. 8). He speaks out of the strong feeling of his own personal relation to God and Christ. So Jesus speaks of "my Father," while he taught that all men were children of the Most High (*Matt.* vii. 21, x. 32, 33, xii. 50, xv. 13, xvi. 17, xviii. 10, 35, xx. 23, xxvi. 29, 39, 42).

i. 5. Your fellowship in furtherance of the Gospel. A.V. simply *in the Gospel* does not fully express the meaning of co-operation. They not only share with him the benefits of the Gospel, but are fellow-workers with him. The words are sometimes understood as referring to the gifts of the Philippians. The thought of this substantial help would naturally not be absent from Paul's mind, as a token of their goodwill and earnestness (cp. iv. 15). But their co-operation in the cause of the Gospel was of much wider scope than that (cp. vv. 7, 29).

From the first day, when he first came to them preaching the Gospel, and they so gladly heard his message. His joy in them has only deepened with growing experience, which has given him a settled confidence that they will not fall away from their faithfulness (cp. iv. 15).

i. 6. He who began a good work in you, that is, God, **will perfect it.** (not "*perform it*," as A.V.). Cp. ii. 13. Paul has no fear of their resisting the divine grace. Their attainment is not complete (ii 2, iii. 15). But he is sure they will continue steadily to grow in the Christian life. Very different his feeling towards the Galatians (*Gal.* i. 6, iii. 3).

Until the day of Jesus Christ. The end of the present age, when Paul with the rest of the disciples at that time expected Jesus to return to the earth to be

manifested as the Christ (the Messiah) in celestial glory and power, and to establish his perfect kingdom on earth (iii. 20 ; 1 *Thess.* iv. 14-17 ; 1 *Cor.* xv. 51. Cp. Carpenter's *Life in Palestine*, ch. vi., esp. p. 166). The present age was the time of probation, during which the disciples must remain faithful, living as citizens of the kingdom, so that when the time came they might be fit to take their place in it.

This ardent expectation of the first disciples was corrected by the teaching of experience, and now we have gained a wider conception of the order of divine providence, both in human history and in the universe which is its scene.

"It is hardly to be supposed that, if Paul the Apostle, as he lay on deck by night, had looked into the clear Ægean sky with the eye of Newton, it would have made no difference in the form of his faith and expectation. He could no longer have thought of the heaven of the Ascension, a colony just above the clouds, whence in a day the procession of the saints might come. The earth of the Advent could scarcely have been retained by him as the centre of the Divine Monarchy, the metropolis of Time and Providence, to which all eyes were turned, and where the heir of all things should receive the homage of the universe. Had the Apostle known what affluence of worlds there is, and how they lie in the perspective of space, I suppose he would have been content with giving his gospel a human significance, and have reduced his doctrine from kosmical to terrestrial" (Martineau's *Hours of Thought on Sacred Things*, ii., p. 210. Cp. also *Loss and Gain in Recent Theology*, 1881, p. 14, concerning our abandonment of "the entire Messianic

mythology," and our thought of Jesus as "simply the divine flower of humanity, blossoming after ages of spiritual growth,—the realised possibility of life in God." Also in the *Endeavours after the Christian Life*, xix., "The Great Year of Providence;" and xxxviii., "The Christian Time-View").

i. 7. "I cannot but have this confidence, in my overflowing love for you, because I know how truly you are partakers in the life and work of the Gospel." His love and confidence alike are grounded in the knowledge of their faithfulness.

I have you in my heart, better than the alternative reading "*you have me in your heart*," for he is still giving expression to his thankfulness and love for them.

In my bonds, etc., ye are partakers with me of grace (not of *my grace*, as A.V.). Through their sympathy with him in his imprisonment and in his testimony, and also through what they themselves have suffered at Philippi and the witness they have borne, they share with him the grace of the new life, its help and its blessedness (cp. note, ver. 2). Hence his confidence and joy in them.

Defence. His bold and joyful witness to the truth of the Christian Gospel, whether in private intercourse or at his own trial.

Confirmation. Strengthening of the influence of the Gospel as a living power in the disciples, and through them a leaven of new life working in the world.

Ye are partakers, for they also have been faithful witnesses; they have suffered and shown to the world the power and beauty of the Christian character (cp. vv. 29, 30).

i. 8. **In the tender mercies of Christ Jesus**, "in the

heart of Jesus Christ," the crowning expression of his love for them (cp. *Gal.* ii. 20, "no longer I, but Christ liveth in me;" *2 Cor.* xiii. 5; *Rom.* viii. 10). The words have been interpreted as denoting love as strong and pure as that of Christ, and also as describing the mystic union of the disciple with his spiritual Lord. A.V. "*in the bowels of Jesus Christ*" does not correctly render the Greek word, nor the Greek idea as to the physical seat of the affections. The word denotes the nobler viscera, the heart, lungs, etc., as distinguished from the intestines. The former alone were regarded as the seat of the affections by the Greeks. Among the Jews there was no such distinction.

Paul in his love for them speaks out of "the heart of Jesus Christ," and he knows that only such love can give them the same fulness of true life which they need to heal all their differences (cp. also ii. 1-4). So also in our own day a disciple may speak with true and touching words: "Think not that in order to become holy lovers of Christ you need to put away a particle of your humanity; for all that is human in the best sense will thereby become intensified. Your delights will be with the sons of men, in a deeper and wider sense than you before knew of; for love breaks down every barrier, and while it draws a line of peculiar sanctity around our chosen, private friendships, it dissolves all our secret antipathies, our sensitive fears, and our antagonism, inspiring us with the desire to bring to every living soul the sound of this glad evangel, without exception, and without prejudice. Christ reveals to us the secrets of his heart; and then it is, and not till then, that he sends us, with his own seal and commission, back to the world for which

he died, that we also may die for it. It is from the heart of Christ alone that I venture to speak these words to you" (*Josephine E. Butler*).

I. 9-11. PRAYER FOR THEIR PERSEVERANCE.

i. 9. **This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment.** "Love imparts a sensitiveness of touch, gives a keen edge to the discriminating faculty, in things moral and spiritual" (*Lightfoot*). Cp. 1 *John* iv. 8: "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." They had the right sort of love, although they were not yet perfect (cp. ii. 2, 3, iv. 2).

"Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold,
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;

Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need."

WORDSWORTH, *Ode to Duty*.

Knowledge is the more general term, denoting understanding of the principles of life; while **discernment** (not *judgment*, as A.V.), perception, implying apprehension by the senses, refers rather to the practical exercise of reason, in dealing with the affairs and circumstances of life.

i. 10. **Approve things that are excellent,** or *prove the things that differ*. The verb is the same as in 1 *Thess.* v. 21: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

And in 1 *Thess.* ii. 4 : "As we have been approved of God to be entrusted with the Gospel, . . . God, who proveth our hearts." So in *Rom.* ii. 18. Either rendering is possible. To discern differences is with the Christian to approve the excellent.

Sincere, or rather *pure, unsullied, void of offence*, without stumbling. *Ecclus.* xxiii. 20 : "Go not in the way wherein thou mayst fall, and stumble not among the stones." *Matt.* iv. 6 : "Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

Unto the day of Christ, not *until* but *for*. The day, the consummation of Messiah's kingdom (cp. ver. 6, ii. 16).

i. 11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, the end of all Christian endeavour. Cp. iii. 9 : "Not having as my righteousness that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ." This great distinction is very largely the subject-matter of the letters to the Galatians and Romans. The strong and living spirit of Christ in the disciples, making it clear to them what it was to live as children of God, from the starting-point of perfect trust in his love, bore fruits of true righteousness.

Through Jesus Christ. Cp. note on ver. 2 ; also *Eph.* iv. 7 ; *John* xv. : "The vine and the branches."

Unto the glory and praise of God. Cp. ii. 11. The whole mission of Christ was for the perfecting of the kingdom of God, to fulfil the purpose of the supreme Father in the human race (1 *Cor.* xv. 24-28).

I. 12-26. PAUL'S ACCOUNT OF THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL, AND HIS OWN CONDITION AS A PRISONER AT ROME.

THE Apostle speaks first of what he has most at heart—the progress of the Gospel, to which he has given his life. He is at last in Rome, where he has so often longed to be, the chief city of the Empire, and so of the world, where there was already a considerable Christian church, noted for its faith (cp. *Rom.* i. 8-15, xv. 22-33). But he has come in very different plight from what he had hoped; not as a free man rejoicing on his way, and resting there for a time, before undertaking fresh labours in a yet more distant field, but as a prisoner in chains, not knowing what opportunity he may have of bearing his testimony, and not improbably in face of a speedy death. And yet, he tells his friends, it has all fallen out well, and his very chains have brought him into contact with men whom otherwise he hardly could have reached, and the rest of the disciples are encouraged by his fortitude to preach yet more earnestly throughout the city. These things fill him with thankfulness and joy; and they give him confidence in the final issue of whatever he may have to suffer. Whether it is to be life or death, he is sure that it will be for the further manifesting of the power and grace of Christ. This is now his very life. It is his own salvation, the perfecting of the Christian life in himself. It is true he even longs for death, that he may be with Christ in heaven; but still he feels the attraction of the work on earth. The love of his many friends, and the churches' need, still hold him. And out of this conflict of feeling he

comes to the assurance that he will be set at liberty, that he may see his Philippians again.

i. 12. He knows what concern they will have felt at the news of his imprisonment. Very likely Epaphroditus has told him of their distress. But he reassures them. So far from hindering his ministry, his sufferings and imprisonment have given additional force to his preaching, and have really been for the progress of the Gospel. Later on he even bids them rejoice, if his death should follow as the crown of his faithful labours and sufferings (ii. 17, 18). We can understand with what eager interest the disciples at Philippi would receive this news from the Imperial City. They would remember how it was when Paul first preached to *them*, and the imprisonment that befell him there. They would share his thankful triumph that even among the men of the Emperor's guard, and in the imperial household itself, disciples were now to be found. In Philippi, as a Roman colony, these things would be noted with special interest.

i. 13. **My bonds became manifest in Christ.** It was known that he was no ordinary prisoner, but was there for conscience' sake; so that men came to see him, and listened the more readily to his word, because his chains were a mark of his sincerity. They also became a witness to Christ.

Throughout the whole Prætorian Guard (cp. *Introd.*, p. 24). The soldiers of the imperial guard came to know the reason of his imprisonment, and so the knowledge of the Gospel spread. The constant succession of his guards, attached to his person by a chain, would be witnesses of his intercourse with all who came about him, whether disciples or others, and could not fail to

be influenced by the earnestness and power of his words, nor less perhaps by his patience and cheerfulness of temper under that ignoble restraint. Many of the guard may have been stolid and even brutal, but some at least had been touched; and through them many others would be attracted to the Apostle. Somewhat similar may have been the case of the jailor at Philippi (cp. *Introd.*, p. 15). The reading *in the whole Prætorium* would mean throughout the whole camp of the guards, which was outside the city, and in or near which Paul's quarters would be. But the text of the R.V. seems to be better. Less probable still is the A.V. "*in all the Palace*," which could only be accepted on the supposition that Paul as a provincial used an inaccurate expression to describe the Emperor's palace, for in Rome it was never known as the Prætorium. It has been argued that if Paul had found quarters within the precincts of the Palace, which was an enormous establishment, including people of all ranks, he would be more likely to gain some hold on members of "Cæsar's household" (iv. 22). But the supposition in itself is improbable. Detachments of the same guard, in whose keeping Paul was, were constantly on duty at the Palace, so that members of the household might easily hear of this prisoner and be attracted to him, without his living on the spot.

To all the rest, all others who came to him or in any way came within reach of his influence. Not (as A.V.) "in all other places."

i. 14. Most of the brethren, literally, the more, the majority. So in 2 *Cor.* ii. 6, iv. 15. The thought is of the general body of the disciples, without necessarily

any thought of the minority. "The multitude of the brethren" (*Vaughan*). The contagion of Paul's courage and enthusiasm kindled a new zeal and boldness in the majority of the disciples in Rome.

The word of God, in this sense of the Gospel, is unusual, but is added in the R.V. on good authority.

i. 15. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife. Not all, therefore, who preached with renewed vigour on account of his presence in Rome did so with singleness of purpose. Less worthy motives than pure devotion to the Gospel were at work in some. They seem to have been men who shared at least to some extent the bitterness and hostility of the strictly Jewish party in the church against Paul. They are generally supposed to have been actually members of that party, to whom Paul clearly refers in iii. 2, in a warning most probably already familiar to the Philippians, against those who had wrought so much mischief among the churches of Galatia and elsewhere. If the hostile preachers in Rome were really such, then the greater mildness of Paul's tone here than in iii. 2, and still more in *Galatians*, is very striking. In explanation it is suggested that Paul is so deeply impressed with the importance of Christ being preached in Rome, and rejoices so much in the thought (ver. 18), that he can overlook even grave inconsistencies in the form of doctrine proclaimed. But this could hardly be the attitude of the man who wrote *Gal.* i. 6-9. Or perhaps the reason of his greater mildness here is in the fact that their hostility is merely personal to himself (ver. 17), and in Rome there is no church of his founding to be jealously guarded against their corrupting influence;

while afterwards (iii. 2) the thought that perhaps even his Philippians might be led astray by such teachers, leads him again to greater vehemence of condemnation.

But a more satisfactory explanation appears to be that offered by Dr. Pfeiderer (*Das Urchristenthum*, p. 147), who maintains that the Jewish Christians in Rome were not of the extreme sort in their antagonism to Paul, but may have been more closely allied to the party which formerly in Corinth bore the name of Apollos than to that of Cephas (1 Cor. i. 11-17). If then their doctrine of Christ was of a more Jewish Alexandrine type, regarding their Lord as a universal spiritual power, rather than the national Jewish Messiah, it might be possible for Paul to feel very differently towards them, and to recognise (what in the other case was impossible) that they did in fact "preach Christ." And their hostility to Paul would not have been based so much on questions of fundamental doctrine as on personal enmity and prejudice, derived very likely from their brethren of the more extreme Jewish party. In this view the references of i. 15 and iii. 2 are not to the same class of men.

i. 16. The one do it of love, those who are in sympathy with him, acknowledging his true apostleship. The A.V. transposes vv. 16, 17.

i. 17. Of faction, not sincerely. From partisanship, their enmity against Paul being stronger than their allegiance to Christ. An early instance of the kind of sectarian vehemence and rancour which has been unhappily too common since then.

To raise up affliction for me in my bonds. Strengthening their own party and speaking ill of Paul, they

thought to make him feel his confinement more bitterly. But the very vehemence of their denunciation may have led men to turn to him with the more interest, while the different tone of his preaching would carry a strong assurance of his higher truth. That they thought to make it go harder with him at his trial by bringing his cause into notoriety, is a suggested, but unlikely, interpretation. A.V. "*to add affliction*" renders a different reading of the original text.

i. 18. Whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice. It is not necessary to infer from these words that Paul actually rejoiced in the insincerity of the preaching of his factious opponents, or in the spread of false notions of the Gospel. If we must suppose that he here refers to members of the extreme Jewish party, it may be that his joy, as far as their preaching was concerned, was simply in the fact that it served to call attention to the matter of the Gospel, while their vehemence against himself might lead sincere inquirers to come all the more to him, so that even their disingenuous zeal served the cause of the higher truth in Rome. But if their teaching concerning Christ was not so radically opposed to his own, all the more he would be able to rejoice.

i. 19. He rejoices not only in the spread of the Gospel, but also in the fact that even the enmity of his opponents, and any bitterness they can add to his imprisonment, minister also to his own true life, and his own power of bearing witness to Christ. There is nothing selfish in this dwelling of Paul on the thought of his own salvation. His salvation is the perfecting of the Christian life in himself (vv. 20, 21), and this means not only blessedness

for him, but the progress of the cause to which he has given his life, through the more perfect manifesting of the glory of his Lord. "**My salvation**" here must be so understood, and not, as sometimes suggested, in the narrower sense of deliverance from prison; for it is to be "whether in life or death."

Through your supplication. Another instance of the close bonds of affection which united Paul to the members of his church, and the help which he gained from spiritual fellowship with them (2 *Cor.* i. 11; *Rom.* xv. 30; *Philem.* 22).

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

TENNYSON, *The Passing of Arthur*.

(Cp. also iv. 6, and Martineau's *Hours of Thought*, ii., p. 234, "The Prayer of Faith").

And the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. "No longer I, but Christ liveth in me" (*Gal.* ii. 20, iv. 6).

i. 20. In nothing shall I be put to shame. Neither his own failure in bearing his testimony, nor anything that his enemies might do by argument or violence.

With all boldness, as always, so now also. As before through many dangers and sufferings he had stood firm (2 *Cor.* vi. 1-10, xi. 23-28), so now he trusted to have the needed strength for whatever he might have to endure,

whether in a lingering imprisonment or a public trial or death.

Christ shall be magnified in my body. He is so full of the thought of Christ that he is carried by his eagerness into a new construction of the sentence. A calmer and more logical sequence would have given, "I shall be able to magnify Christ, or bear my witness to him." Lightfoot suggests: "With sensitive reverence the Apostle shrinks from any mention of his own agency, lest he should seem to glorify himself" (cp. 2 Cor. iv. 10).

Whether in life or death. Whichever way his imprisonment ends, his bonds have been so manifestly in Christ, that it will be a good witness. He is willing and will rejoice to die for Christ (cp. ii. 17, 18).

i. 21. **For to me to live is Christ, to die is gain.** In either case it is *salvation* (Rom. xiv. 8; Gal. ii. 20; Col. iii. 4. Cp. Martineau's *Endeavours after the Christian Life*, p. 277, "The Shadow of Death").

As to the issue of his trial, he hardly knows what to hope. Really for himself death is best, because it will not only be a seal to his faithful ministry, but will mean for himself unspeakable joy in greater nearness to Christ. And yet affection for his friends and the thought of his present work hold him. He knows that he is needed. And so out of the conflict of feelings comes the conviction that he will be spared to come to them again.

i. 22. The construction of this verse is uncertain, but the R.V. seems best: "If the immediate result of my labours is to be continued life and work (which is good), whether to be unfeignedly glad of that I know not, for really to die is better still; and what to choose I know not." A.V. and margin of R.V. would mean:

"If I am to have more life here, it will be a fitting continuance of my labours; there will be satisfaction in carrying on my work in the churches to greater completion."

i. 23. **I am in a strait betwixt the two.** I am hemmed in on both sides, unable to give free scope to either desire.

Having the desire to depart and be with Christ. Paul at this time can hardly have been much more than sixty, and yet he felt himself an old man (see the note on *Philem.* 9). He may well have been worn out and prematurely old by all that he had suffered (2 *Cor.* xi. 23-30), and by his tireless energy in the service of the churches. And now latterly there had been the added trial of a long imprisonment.

With all the joy that Paul had in his ministry, and deep thankfulness for the deliverance he himself had found in the new life of faith, there may well have been times when he was weary and would look forward with wistful longing for the day that would give him final rest. He had no settled home, none of those closest ties which make this earth so dear. "Death worketh in us," he wrote to the Corinthians, "but life in you." The life of the apostles was given for the churches: "As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 *Cor.* vi. 10). If then the Christ delayed his coming, and the time was not yet, this faithful disciple, "being such a one as Paul the aged," feeling at times the burden and the hardship of his earthly lot, might well have the desire to depart, and be with Christ.

To depart. The word so translated is used of a ship, to loose from its moorings; and of a camp, to break up. Here the thought may be of the striking of a tent, and

the going forward on the heavenward journey. The analogy would be familiar from the story of the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness to the promised land.

To be with Christ (cp. 2 *Cor.* v. 6-8). In these passages Paul seems to imply that the disciples who die before the return of Christ in his glory would be with him in heaven until then. But, on the other hand, in 1 *Thess.* iv. 14, 16, and 1 *Cor.* xv. 51, 52, the idea seems to be that the "dead in Christ" sleep until they are raised up to take their place in his kingdom. The apparent difference of view must be left unexplained, as perhaps a sign that Paul had not himself arrived at any certainty of conviction on the point.

i. 24. Their need, as well as his love for them, still holds him to the earth.

i. 25. This confidence of Paul's is uttered in the strength of his feeling. In ii. 17, 18 he contemplates at least the possibility of his death, and in ii. 24 speaks only of his "trust" that he may come to them.

i. 26. Their joy and strength in the Christian life largely depended on their fellowship with Paul. If he came to them again, he would help them still more. Their joy would be not "for him" (A.V.), but by his help, in their own life in Christ.

I. 27-30. EXHORTATION TO THE PHILIPPIANS TO STAND FAST.

i. 27. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ. "In any case, whether I come to you

or not, that is the one essential thing." The verb means literally *perform your duties as citizens, live your citizenship* (cp. iii. 20, "our citizenship is in heaven;" *Eph.* ii. 19, "fellow-citizens with the saints." Cp. Martineau's *Endeavours after the Christian Life*, p. 23, "Great Principles and Small Duties"). Writing from Rome to Philippi, a Roman colony, where Paul had declared himself a Roman citizen, this metaphor was natural and peculiarly fitting. Polycarp, in his letter to the Philippians (§ 5), uses the same word: "If we perform our duties as citizens in a manner worthy of him, we shall also reign with him (we shall afterwards share in his sovereignty)."

That ye stand fast (iv. 1; *1 Thess.* iii. 8; *Gal.* v. 1).

In one spirit (cp. ii. 1; *Eph.* iv. 3, "unity of the spirit").

With one soul (cp. *1 Thess.* v. 23 for the threefold division of human nature into spirit, soul and body). The soul was the principle of animal life, and the seat of the passions and affections. By the spirit men became capable of the higher life and communion with God. The true life of those who are spiritual is the constant theme of Paul's epistles (cp. esp. *Rom.* viii.). The carnal (fleshly) and passionate man has to be subdued by the spirit of Christ, the lowly, reverent and trustful spirit of a child of God (see also *John* iii.). He who is born again of the Spirit can understand heavenly secrets.

Striving for the faith of the Gospel. The verb is the same as in iv. 3, "they laboured with me in the Gospel." The conception here is not, as in iii. 13, of a race in which they are to press forward to a goal, but rather of a

contest, in which they have to stand firmly and strive for victory.

For the faith. Not striving to gain faith in themselves, but being faithful to the faith of the Gospel which they possess, and for which (regarded objectively, as a new spiritual power in the world) they have to give themselves, and be "worthy of the Gospel," according to their strength helping on its progress (1 Cor. ix. 23). "Striving in concert with the faith" (*Lightfoot*). "Sharing the contest of the faith of the Gospel" (*Vaughan*). The faith itself, the diviner life, is represented as striving in the world for victory.

i. 28. The adversaries. Those who opposed and persecuted them, the hostile Jews and the heathen mob, when stirred up against them.

An evident token of perdition, destruction. The fact that they are adversaries of the Gospel is their condemnation (*Matt.* vii. 13; *Heb.* x. 29; *2 Thess.* i. 4-7). The common faith of the Christians at that time appears to have been that those who resisted the Gospel would be shut out of the kingdom at the coming of the Christ, and suffer destruction (not eternal torment). The persecutors were judged already, because they turned from the light, and their works were evil (*John* iii. 18).

Your salvation. Their steadfast suffering was a token that they possessed the true life, which is from God; the true life now, to be perfected in the blessedness of the coming kingdom.

i. 29. It hath been granted, as a favour, a gift of the Divine grace. It is a privilege not only to have the joy of the life of faith, but also to suffer for its sake (i. 7; *Matt.* v. 11, 12).

"The Cross of Christ is divided throughout the world. To each his portion ever comes. Thou therefore, O my soul, cast not thy portion from thee, but rather take it to thee, as thy most precious relic, and lay it up, not in a gold and silver shrine, but in a golden heart, a heart clothed with gentle charity, with patience and suffering submission" (*Christ the Consoler*, by Ellice Hopkins, 1879, p. 121). See also the Sermon of Ugo Bassi in the hospital at Rome, in *The Disciples*, by Mrs. Hamilton King, Part III. :

"Let us take heed in time
That God may now be glorified in us ;
And while we suffer, let us set our souls
To suffer perfectly : since this alone,
The suffering, which is this world's special grace,
May here be perfected, and left behind.
—But in obedience and humility ;—
Waiting on God's hand, not forestalling it.
Seek not to snatch presumptuously the palm
By self-election ; poison not thy wine
With bitter herbs, if He has made it sweet ;
Nor rob God's treasures because the key
Is easy to be turned by mortal hands.
The gifts of birth, death, genius, suffering,
Are all for His hand only to bestow.
Receive thy portion and be satisfied.
Who crowns himself a king is not the more
Royal ; nor he who mars himself with stripes
The more partaker of the Cross of Christ."

i. 30. They knew what he suffered at Philippi at his first coming (*Acts*. xvi. 19 ; 1 *Thess.* ii. 2), and afterwards (*2 Cor.* vii. 5), and themselves shared in the troubles. And they know of his experience elsewhere, ending in

this Roman imprisonment, of which Epaphroditus on his return will tell them much more than the bare report, which so far has reached them.

II.—1-18. FURTHER EXHORTATIONS, ESPECIALLY TO HUMILITY AND UNSELFISH LOVE, AFTER THE GREAT EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

PAUL here takes up directly the subject which is in his mind throughout the letter—the need of greater unity in the church at Philippi. Urging them especially to humility and self-renunciation, he sets before them the greatest example of all. The cause of trouble at Philippi does not seem to have been doctrinal, but personal disagreement (Intro., p. 31).

ii. 1. The appeal is to all their past experience as Christian disciples, their high calling in Christ Jesus, the true impulse of love, the unity there must be in the fellowship of the Spirit and the deeper sympathies quickened by the new life. "So surely as there is any grace or blessing in the Gospel, I beseech you." "I beseech you by all the grace, etc." (*Vaughan*).

Comfort in Christ. Better, *encouragement, exhortation* (*Rom.* xii. 8). "If your life in Christ, your knowledge of Christ, speaks to your hearts with a persuasive eloquence" (*Lightfoot*).

Consolation of love. Better, *incentive* in the power of Christian love. Or perhaps, in the knowledge of the love of God (cp. *1 Cor.* xiii.).

Fellowship of the Spirit, or *fellowship of spirit*, which seems to follow more naturally if the previous words be understood as of love ruling in the hearts of the

disciples, as afterwards also the "tender mercies and compassions." Then the thought would be of the disciples united and quickened by the same spirit of the new life, which Paul sometimes speaks of as the gift of Christ, and sometimes of God. The disciples are united in the one spirit with God, as Christ also is one with the Father (cp. note on "the Lord Jesus Christ," i. 2). There is no reason here, any more than there is in 2 *Cor.* xiii. 14, for importing into Paul's words the meaning of the later theology as to the separate personality of the Holy Spirit. (For *fellowship*, the sharing in something, cp. iii. 10; *Philem.* 6; 1 *Cor.* x. 16.)

Tender mercies. A.V. to be corrected as in i. 8.

ii. 2. **Fulfil ye my joy**; the joy that he already has in them (i. 3-11) he begs them to perfect by more perfect discipleship.

That ye be of the same mind. This harmony in their mutual relations for which he pleads Paul enlarges upon, by the phrases concerning **the same love**, and the common spirit (**of one accord**), and clenches the matter by repeating more emphatically, **of one mind**. So we speak with emphasis of *one and the same thing*. The subject is taken up again in the exhortation of iv. 2, 3.

Faction and vainglory. . Party spirit and personal vanity, the cause of their troubles (cp. *Gal.* v. 26).

Lowliness of mind. The word so translated appears first in the New Testament. In classical Greek *lowly* implied always something abject and base. But he who was "meek and lowly in heart," declared a blessing on the meek and the poor in spirit (cf. *Rom.* xii. 10, "in honour preferring one another"). Vanity causes discord, but

not so humility, "the low, sweet root, from which all other virtues shoot."

ii. 4. Not only judging generously of the deserts of others, but consulting their interests also, as much as your own.

ii. 5. **Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.** The mind, the temper or spirit of life, in which he fulfilled his mission on earth. It was the spirit of humility and self-renunciation, not looking "to his own things," but "to the things of others." This is what Paul wishes to impress upon the disciples.*

As he writes he thinks of Christ as the glorified Lord, who has triumphed over death, who is "of heaven," and has become "a life-giving spirit." In the fulfilment of the divine purpose he holds the first place as "the Son of God with power" (*Rom.* i. 4, viii. 3, 34, xiv. 9; *1 Cor.* viii. 6, xv. 20-28, 46; *2 Cor.* iv. 4-6), and he is expected to return to the earth on a day not far distant to be manifested in his glory, and to establish the divine kingdom (*Phil.* i. 6, 10, iii. 20, 21, iv. 5). To Paul himself, with his passionate allegiance and gratitude and love, Christ is the Redeemer, who has set him "free from the law of sin and death," and has given him new

* "There is a knowing of the *truth as it is in Jesus*, as it is in a *Christ-like nature*, as it is in that sweet, mild, humble and loving spirit of Jesus, which spreads itself, like a *morning sun*, upon the souls of good men, full of light and life.. It profits little to know Christ Himself after the flesh; but He gives His Spirit to good men, *that searcheth the deep things of God*. There is an inward beauty, life and loveliness in Divine truth, which cannot be known but when it is digested into life and practice."—*Select Discourses*, by John Smith, M.A., Cambridge, 1659 (Platonist and Latitudinarian), p. 8 of 4th ed., 1859.

life, opening to him all the riches of the love of God, and the promise of heavenly life, freely offered to all (*Rom.* vi. 22, 23, viii. 1, 2, 32-39 ; 2 *Cor.* v. 14-20 ; *Gal.* ii. 20, 21).

But he who now in the faith of the Apostle holds this lofty place, who is "the Lord, the Spirit" (2 *Cor.* iii. 17, 18), while he was on earth trod the path of humility ; for their sake he "became poor," and suffered and died (*Rom.* v. 6-8, xv. 3 ; 2 *Cor.* viii. 9). The Cross was a stumbling-block to the Jews. The idea of a Messiah clothed not in majesty but humility, who suffered a death of shame, was to the popular mind inconceivable. But to the disciples, in the light of their Master's teaching, confirmed by the ideal pictured by the great prophet of the captivity (*Isa.* xlii. 1-9, liii.), the lowliness of Jesus and his obedience unto death became an inspiration (1 *Cor.* i. 24). If he had been minded to please himself and look "to his own things," the Master might at once have assumed the splendour and the manifest power and authority, which were his by right, as the chosen Christ of God. But for their sake he humbled himself, that they might not be condemned, but be led into the new life. Such renunciation kindled the greater love and devotion in the hearts of the disciples, while at the same time it became an example to them of what their life ought to be. If now in the churches they would keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, it must be through such humility and self-renouncing love. They must learn to suffer with Christ if they would be glorified with him (*Rom.* viii. 15-17 ; *Gal.* ii. 20, vi. 14 ; 2 *Cor.* iv. 10-15).

For the right understanding of the following very difficult passage (vv. 6-11) these things must be borne

in mind. And there is a further question, which must materially affect the interpretation, viz., whether Paul believed in the pre-existence of Christ? Was the glory of the risen Lord reflected back in the Apostle's mind only upon the beginning of the earthly career, when, as the chosen Christ, the Messiah, Jesus was endowed with spiritual power not given to ordinary men, and had the right, if he had so willed, to exercise dominion and manifest glorious power in the world? Or did the faith of the Apostle reach even further back? and did he think of him, who was declared to be "the Son of God with power," as having existed in an earlier heavenly life? As we read that, "when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman," etc., and that "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor" (*Gal.* iv. 4; *2 Cor.* viii. 9; cp. also *1 Cor.* x. 4), there seems to be good ground for the latter opinion; and it is held by Pfleiderer and other scholars, who exercise a judgment free from the bias of dogmatic necessity. But the passages of this kind are neither so many nor so definite as to render the conclusion undoubted; and it may be argued with much force that the case of Paul is different from that of the writers who hold the Alexandrine doctrine of the Logos, and identify the spiritual Christ with the "Word" of God existing before the worlds, and that there is no sufficient reason for supposing that the Apostle of the Gentiles carried back his thought, except ideally, to any point earlier than the natural birth of Jesus.

The general drift of the passage, however, is clear, whatever interpretation may be given to special points. Although from the first he held so lofty a place in the

order of divine providence, when Christ came to fulfil his mission on earth, of his own will, and because it was the best and most helpful way, he did not manifest the full glory of his nature. He did not claim or exercise the authority and power which were rightfully his, but chose rather to appear as a servant in humility, and even to be obedient unto the most shameful death. And for this humbling of himself God the more highly exalted him, so that now all worship of the eternal Father is to be rendered in his name.

ii. 6. **Who, being in the form of God,** "being, as he originally existed (as he really was in himself, before his humiliation as after, but not implying eternal existence), divine in nature, one who manifested essential attributes of God." But when we try to understand clearly what Paul's meaning was in these words, we find ourselves at once in the deep waters of uncertain speculation. The only thing that is quite apparent, is that here, as in other passages, Paul does not say and cannot mean in any sense to imply that Christ is himself God.*

* Cp. I *Cor.* iii. 23, viii. 6, xv. 24-28; *Rom.* viii. 3, 29. In the *Ignatian Epistles*, which belong to the next century, it is different. In them the doctrine that Christ is God is clearly stated, though the term is no doubt used in a subordinate sense, e.g., "The will of the Father and of Jesus Christ, our God" (*Epistle to the Ephesians*). "The love of Jesus Christ, our God;" "For our God, Jesus Christ, existing in the Father," etc. (*Epistle to the Romans*). "Servants of Christ, the God" (*Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, § 10). So also in Lightfoot's reconstruction of the text of a passage in the *Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians*: "The eternal High Priest Himself, the God, Jesus Christ;" and, "Who shall believe on our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, and on His Father that raised Him from the dead" (§ 12). Observe, "*our God*" was raised from the dead! But the

If it had been so, how could he possibly have spoken of "God" being "on an equality with God," or of God highly exalting him?

In Paul's view Christ was essentially the ideal, spiritual man, differing from others in that he was not only a "living soul," but also a "life-giving spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 46; and see note on i. 27). He is the Son of God with power (Rom. i. 3), and God foreordained that the disciples should be "conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29). But while manifesting the true spirit of sonship, and by the quickening influence of his "life-giving spirit" drawing men into the fellowship of the same deeper life with God, Christ also of necessity makes clearer to the world the will of the Father, his glory, who is light and love, who now in the fulness of time would draw men nearer to himself through the helpful spirit of his Son. And so Paul speaks of the "light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is *the image of God*;" and of God, "who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the *knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*" (2 Cor. iv. 4, 6). In the Book of Genesis we read that man was originally created "in the image of God" (Gen. i. 26, 27), where the Septuagint translation uses the same word as Paul. But the Apostle's

shock which such language must give to the reverent Theist is even greater when it has to be endured from modern theologians, *e.g.*, in such a sentence as this: "The Father is not looking to His own things, any more than the Son. Each Person of the adorable Trinity looks away from Self to secure the glory of His Mate" (Rev. R. M. Edgar, M.A., on this passage, in the *Pulpit Commentary*, 1886).

knowledge of the glory of God, as he saw it in the face of Jesus Christ, the spiritual Son of God, was deeper than that of the old writer of the Creation story. To be in the image of him "who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 *Tim.* vi. 16), cannot imply any likeness of outward form, but only of spiritual being. It cannot mean that he who is *like* God is God. But he is not merely a creature, no more than a part of the outward manifestation of the Creator's wisdom and power; he shares in spiritual communion the very mind of the Eternal. He embodies in himself, in his own spiritual being, all the riches of the love of God, his compassion and longsuffering, the wonderful providence that opens a new way of life to all mankind, that they may be indeed children of God. So Christ represented to the disciples their deepest and truest thought of God; and the revelation was so largely of the spiritual life *in himself*, who was with the Father in secret, that they might truly speak of the glory of God seen in his face. And although this expression of Paul's refers to the glorified Lord in heaven, it is a natural inference that he who did thus reveal the glory of God had in himself from the first the spiritual power and knowledge of the truth to be declared. Thus we may perhaps arrive at the meaning of **being in the form of God**, *i.e.*, embodying in himself the purpose, will and love of God, and so partaking of his spiritual and celestial glory.

"Divine truth is better understood, as it unfolds itself in the purity of men's hearts and lives, than in all those subtle niceties into which curious wits may lay it forth. And therefore our Saviour, who is the

great Master of it, would not, while He was here on earth, draw it up into any system or body, nor would His disciples after Him ; He would not lay it out to us in any canons or articles of belief, not being indeed so careful to stock and enrich the world with opinions and notions, as with true piety, and a Godlike pattern of purity, as the best way to thrive in all spiritual understanding. His main scope was to promote a holy life, as the best and most compendious way to a right belief. He hangs all true acquaintance with divinity upon the doing of God's will : ' If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God ' " (Smith's *Select Discourses*, 1659, 4th ed. 1859, p. 9).

Counted it not a prize (*a thing to be grasped*) to be on an equality with God. (1) "Counted not his being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped as a prize, but was willing if need be to relinquish it." Or (2) according to another rendering : "Counted not his being on an equality with God as an act of grasping, as implying an act of violence or the character of a violent one, a robber." These words must refer to the period in the existence of him who was "in the form of God," when he was about to enter on his earthly mission, and they must be understood in the light of the preceding phrase.

He who was "in the form of God" might well be spoken of by the disciple who regarded him as "the Lord, the Spirit," and "the Son of God with power," as being on an equality with God, not in the later metaphysical sense (as though there could be Two, or even Three, who are Eternal ; yet not Three Eternals, but One Eternal), but as belonging to the supreme spiritual sphere

of being, somewhat as it is said of his subsequent exaltation, being "at the right hand of God" (*Rom.* viii. 34; cp. also *Eph.* i. 20). Or if the thought is of his condition on earth, perhaps the idea is that by virtue of his spiritual endowment and his office as the Christ he is the representative of God on earth, destined to become spiritual Lord of all, so that all things should be put in subjection under him, until finally he should deliver up the kingdom to God himself (*1 Cor.* xv. 24-28).

It has also been suggested that the clause translated, "being on an equality with God," may really mean here no more than "being like a god, a subordinate divine being" among men (and so also "being in the form of a god"), the reference being to the lofty powers and honours ascribed to the Messiah, and the use of the term God in the subordinate sense being not uncommon at that time. But this interpretation seems inadmissible, especially as in the only place in which Paul so uses the term he disclaims for Christian disciples any recognition of "gods many and lords many" (*1 Cor.* viii. 6).

If the first rendering of the clause be adopted, the meaning will be that his "being on an equality with God" was a condition of spiritual blessedness and honour, which might be relinquished for a time, as indeed was the case when Christ chose the way of humility. He did not grasp at or hold closely to this treasure, but denied himself for a time the blessedness and honour which were naturally his, in order to fulfil his mission in the world. This is the rendering of the R.V., and of Lightfoot, who paraphrases: "Though existing before the worlds in the Eternal Godhead, yet He did not cling with avidity to the prerogatives of His

Divine majesty, did not ambitiously display His equality with God ; but divested Himself of the glories of heaven, and took upon Him the nature of a servant, assuming the likeness of men." This rendering, apart from the assumption of the absolute Godhead of the Christ which is not implied in the text, admirably suits the argument of the passage.

But the second rendering is perhaps more likely to be correct. The A.V. translates "*thought it not robbery to be equal with God,*" the meaning of the translators (following the general opinion of the Latin Fathers) being that Christ felt it no unlawful thing, no act of robbery for him to be, or to put himself, on an equality with God, since he actually was God himself. Such a rendering, however, even if it were admissible as a theological expression of Paul's, is not suitable to the purpose of the argument, which is to give an instance of the humility, not the dignity or self-assertion, however justifiable, of the Christ. But the word here translated *robbery* has really an active meaning (although, if the context demands it, sufficient authority for the passive rendering, as in (1), can be adduced). Strictly according to the form of the word, it means *an act of robbery* or *grasping*, and so the sentence reads, "*thought not the being on an equality with God an act of grasping,*" regarded it not as involving an act of robbery or the character of a robber. It did not imply self-assertion, but renunciation. Then the "*being on an equality with God*" must be understood as a condition of his existence which he could not lay aside, but which was always his, and which was best expressed by his humble and self-renouncing love. So Dr. Vaughan translates :

"Counted not as a means of gain the being equal with God." And Dr. Beet, in the *Expositor* for February 1887 : "Deemed not His being equal to God a means of grasping." Similarly Holsten : "The being equal with God he regarded not as robbery (a snatching of something from another with violence), but as an emptying of himself. (The emptying of himself being contrasted with taking *from another*. Why so ? Because he felt that the being like God involved the divine condition of love, the giving of self.)" It was in the divine compassion of his ministry, the giving of himself for the sake of men, that he most clearly manifested the love and pity of the Father in heaven, showing himself to be indeed "in the form of God."

But emptied himself. A.V., *made himself of no reputation*, is a paraphrase of the verb. If this and the following clauses are taken as describing the manner in which he showed his "equality with God," we should have expected to read, "*but as an emptying of himself*" (as, indeed, Holsten renders it). Paul, however, passes at once to a direct description of what took place in the spiritual history of the Christ. His divine nature he could not lay aside ; but he could relinquish the full exercise of his powers and the manifestation of his glory, and this was the course he actually pursued during his earthly ministry. Or if in the previous clause the first rendering be adopted, the meaning will be that he laid aside his "equality with God," and did not so appear among men.

Taking the form of a servant, a bond-servant, slave. As with the previous *form of God*, it is not a question of outward appearance, but of the inward qualities and

essential character. He did not cease to be divine in nature when he came among men as one who served (cp. *Matt.* xx. 27, 28 ; *Mark* x. 44, 45).

Being made in the likeness of men. The verb denotes *becoming* or *coming into being*, and seems most naturally to refer to his birth into the world (*Gal.* iv. 4, "born of a woman ;" *Rom.* viii. 3, "in the likeness of sinful flesh"). He was born as a man among men, his was a real human body, and he lived a true human life. But, nevertheless, he was more than other men. The spiritual Son of God had voluntarily entered upon the lowly condition of a servant, to bring the *new spirit* into human life, which other men did not as yet possess (*Gal.* iv. 6, 7 ; *Rom.* viii. 9-17). If this verse is taken as referring to the coming of Jesus into the world, the emptying of himself will be the act of the pre-existent one. This is the usual interpretation, the idea being that the Son of God (or with Trinitarians, but certainly not with Paul, God the Son) left a state of heavenly blessedness and glory, to come into the world as one who served. But if this doctrine of pre-existence is judged to be inadmissible, the reference must be to the time when Jesus entered upon his public ministry, and the clause may perhaps be rendered, "becoming (and so appearing) in the likeness of men," that is, "as an ordinary man" (although in himself, in his inward, spiritual life, he was so transcendently above all other men). And the idea will be that when he was pondering his mission, before entering upon his active ministry, he fully realised his spiritual power as Son of God ; but instead of appearing, as he might have done, in glory and with resistless force, he saw and followed the better way of humility.

Cp. Dr. Vance Smith's *Bible and Popular Theology*, ch. xix., and Note E. in the Appendix. A somewhat different conception of the passage is the following : "He stood not aloof from the common life of men, wrapped in his own sublime meditations, and in his intercourse with Heaven, forgetting the sordid earth beneath. That sinless One shrunk not from the saddest and the darkest scenes, but moved as a Man amongst men, mingling with the sinful and the vile, eating and drinking with publicans and sinners. Though he was so far above other men, breathing, as it were, a different atmosphere, and looking upon another world, yet none was ever so near to them, so quick to read what was passing in the soul, so intimate with every homely sorrow. In the strong language of St. Paul, he was 'made sin for us,' bearing, through that strange sympathy which only the Christlike know, the shame and grief which ought to have been felt by others. It was this love which subdued men and made Christ more than the example and teacher, the Redeemer of mankind" (*Spiritual Religion*, Sermons by James Drummond, 1870 ; note on *Spirituality*, p. 201).

ii. 8. **Being found in fashion as a man.** So he appeared in the world, having chosen his place as a man among men. The *fashion* denotes the outward appearance rather than the inward character.

Cp. Dr. Channing's sermon on *The Character of Christ* : "Thus Jesus lived with men ; with the consciousness of unutterable majesty he joined a lowliness, gentleness, humanity and sympathy which have no example in human history. I ask you to contemplate this wonderful union. In proportion to the superiority of Jesus to all

around him was the intimacy, the brotherly love, with which he bound himself to them. I maintain that this is a character wholly remote from human conception. To imagine it to be the product of imposture or enthusiasm shows a strange unsoundness of mind. I contemplate it with a veneration second only to the profound awe with which I look up to God. It bears no mark of human invention. It was real. It belonged to and it manifested the beloved Son of God."

In considering the humility and renunciation of Christ it is well also to remember that other great example, which has appealed with so much force to myriads of hearts in India and other countries of the East. The renunciation of Gotama, the Buddha, was different in circumstances, but no less true in spirit, than that of the Christ. Cp. Edwin Arnold's version of the story of his life.

" I will not have that crown
Which may be mine : I lay aside those realms
Which wait the gleaming of my naked sword :
My chariot shall not roll with bloody wheels
From victory to victory, till earth
Wears the red record of my name. I choose
To tread its paths with patient, stainless feet,
Making its dust my bed, its loneliest wastes
My dwelling, and its meanest things my mates :
Clad in no prouder garb than outcasts wear,
Fed with no meat save what the charitable
Give of their will, sheltered by no more pomp
Than the dim cave lends or the jungle-bush.
This will I do because the woful cry
Of life and all flesh living cometh up
Into my ears, and all my soul is full
Of pity for the sickness of this world ;

Which I will heal, if healing may be found
By uttermost renouncing and strong strife."

The Light of Asia, Bk. IV.

He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. This was a further step in his renunciation. His obedience to God in fulfilling his mission was even unto death. "To live as man was self-surrender ; to die as man was self-sacrifice,—the deepest of humility, the highest of obedience" (*Speaker's Commentary*). The death of the cross was the most shameful of all, that inflicted on criminal slaves. But after the death of Jesus, the cross became the most sacred emblem of self-surrender and obedience unto death, as well as the chief ensign of Christian faith. What Paul thought of the cross and of the death of Christ may be seen from *Rom.* v.-viii. ; *Gal.* ii. 20, vi. 14 ; *1 Cor.* i. 23-25 ; *Phil.* iii. 10. Cp. Martineau's *Hours of Thought*, ii., p. 119, "That the Christ ought to Suffer ;" also pp. 367, 380, and i., p. 121.

ii. 9. Wherefore also God highly exalted him. Having described the humility and renunciation of the Christ, Paul goes on to show how such a life received the highest mark of the divine approval, and so completes the lesson for the disciples' guidance. If he who has been so highly exalted, who has been declared to be "the Son of God with power," set such an example in his earthly life, then certainly for all the disciples it must be the way to the higher and more blessed life.

And gave him the name that is above every name. God raised him to such dignity and power, that (how-

ever he is spoken of) there can be no name so exalted as his. The thought is not of a new title conferred upon him, but of the greater exaltation. It matters not whether he is spoken of or addressed as Jesus Christ, as Lord, or Son of God, or by any other fitting name; each one, because applied to him, would be the name above all others. A.V., *a name*, is a different reading of the text. If it were necessary to suppose that one particular name was here in Paul's mind, it would be *Lord* (cp. ver. 11).

ii. 10. **That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow.** Because he is exalted to be spiritual Lord over all, his spirit quickens all, and the life of every believer is the possession of the "spirit of Christ," "Christ formed in the heart," "in Christ a new creature;" and thus all prayer, all the aspiration of their new life, is offered up in the name of Christ, not in any formal way using the name *Jesus* or *Lord*, but in his spirit. This is but an instance, the highest and most far-reaching, of a general truth of the spiritual life. The child learns to pray, holding its mother's hand, speaking her words, wakened to the meaning of the words by her love and trust. And afterwards, even when the child is become a man, though the words may be different, his truest prayer will often be when he is quickened by that same spirit, and once more his mother's pure love and trust rule perfectly in him. So he might be said to pray in her spirit, and with deep and sacred meaning *in her name*. And again, there is many a man who has come to a new spiritual life through the influence of a friend, or in the fellowship of some chosen home or religious society. He has found a new meaning in prayer when he is with them; their

deeper life has renewed his spirit. And in solitude he is sustained by the thought of them. It will revive his faith should it grow dim. At the remembered hour, even though he is far distant, he may be with them ; at the time of prayer they " make intercession " for him, and he prays " in their spirit," and if he will, " in their name." So every one who is no stranger to the faith and love of Jesus, knowing the power of his spirit, may pray *in his name*.

A.V., at the name of Jesus, is inaccurate, and based upon the assumption that worship is to be offered to Jesus as God. It is also argued that the correct translation, *in the name*, implies the worship of Jesus himself. Passages are quoted, such as Psalm lxiii. 4, " I will bless thee while I live ; I will lift up my hands in thy name," where it is in the name of God, to whom the prayer is offered. But although such an act of reverence or supplication, the token of his desire to pray or to be strengthened in the true spirit of prayer, might be performed by the Psalmist *in the name of God*, with the one thought of what God was to him, it does not follow that there may be no other help in prayer. Because the Christian disciple, with his new thought of Christ, desired to be sustained in his prayer by that " life-giving spirit," there is no reason for inferring that the prayer was offered to him. It is one thing to acknowledge him as Lord, and as such to call upon his name (1 Cor. i. 2), but quite another to address prayer to him as God. Even the name of a human friend may be invoked in the enthusiasm of some great cause, or in distress or the yearning of sacred affection, and much more the name of him who was exalted in the faith of the disciples to so high

a place, yet without making him God (cp. 1 Cor. iii. 23, viii. 6).

Cp. Dr. Channing's sermon on *Christian Worship*: "This house then is erected to the supreme worship of the Father, to the recognition of the Father only as the self-existent, Infinite God. Homage will here be paid to Jesus Christ, and, I trust, a far more profound and affectionate homage than he received on earth, when his spiritual character and the true purposes of his mission were almost unknown. But we shall honour him as the Son, the brightest image, the sent of God, not as God himself. We shall honour him as exalted above every name or dignity in heaven or earth, but as exalted by God for his obedience unto death. We shall honour him as clothed with power to give life and judge, but shall remember that the Father hath given all judgment and quickening energy to the Son. We look up with delight and reverence to his divine virtues, his celestial love, his truth, his spirit; and we are sure that in as far as we imbibe these from the affectionate remembrance of his life, death and triumphs, we shall render the worship most acceptable to this disinterested friend of the human race."

Of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth (or, *of the world below*). The words are indefinite; and although the thought is naturally in the first place of those who actually offer prayer, it does not seem necessary to define the terms as referring to spiritual beings in heaven, the believers on earth, and the dead in Hades or even the devils (cp. *James* ii. 19). Elsewhere Paul describes the whole creation waiting to be delivered from the bondage of corruption (*Rom.* viii.

18-22), and so here the idea may be the same—of the whole creation acknowledging in this way the dominion of Christ, the deliverer.

ii. 11. Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Cp. *Rom.* x. 9; *2 Cor.* iv. 5; and note on i. 2.

To the glory of God the Father. Thus always Paul concludes with the thought of the Supreme. In whatever exalted terms he speaks of Christ, and however lofty the place assigned to him in the realm of spiritual beings, it is always in strict subordination to the Father, who alone is God, and to his ultimate glory. All thankfulness and praise, all the beauty and blessedness of divine life, all dominion and power, belong to him, the beginning and the end of all life. If there is glory in the face of Jesus Christ, it is the reflection of the glory of the Infinite Father, being so manifested to the world (*2 Cor.* iv. 4-6); and if for a time Christ is to have dominion and to judge the living and the dead, it is according to the will of the Father, who is Eternal Righteousness, and with authority which is to be surrendered at last to him, that God may be all in all (*2 Cor.* v. 10; *Rom.* xiv. 9-12; *1 Cor.* xv. 24-28).

ii. 12-18. Having dwelt upon the great example of humility, Paul continues his direct exhortations to the Philippians, seeking to impress upon them their individual responsibility, the faithful exercise of which must not depend on his presence with them. In any case they must be perfected in their discipleship.

ii. 12. Even as ye have always obeyed, touching again on his confidence in them, who from the first accepted the Gospel as he declared it, the doctrine of the new life (*Rom.* i. 5, xv. 18, xvi. 19, 26; *2 Cor.* x. 5, 6).

Work out your own salvation, the perfecting of their life in Christ. They must learn to stand alone, not depending on his presence and support. He points out in the course of the letter their chief faults and hindrances to progress. Later on (iii. 12-14) he speaks of himself also as being engaged in the same strenuous endeavour.

With fear and trembling. In *1 Cor.* ii. 3, *2 Cor.* vii. 15, the phrase seems to imply distrust of self in face of a great task or serious claims made upon one; and so in a somewhat different connection in *Eph.* vi. 5. Such may be Paul's meaning here, implying careful anxiety lest they should not have done enough. But such is hardly the outcome of Paul's joyous faith, and the sentence which follows seems rather to suggest the thought of deep reverence and awe in living out the holier life of their discipleship, since it is really the indwelling God who is the inspiration of their new insight and faithfulness.

ii. 13. For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure. The ultimate source of all spiritual life is God, even the Father (cp. note on ii. 11).

It is God who "sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts" (*Gal.* iv. 6). And in other passages Paul speaks of the direct influence of the Holy Spirit of God, dwelling in men, making them "a temple of the living God" (*1 Cor.* iii. 16). It is "with the Spirit of the living God" that the testimony of their discipleship is written "in tables that are hearts of flesh" (*2 Cor.* iii. 3). It is they who are "led by the Spirit of God" who are "sons of God" (*Rom.* viii. 14). Cp. also *1 Cor.* iii. 6-9. And so here the thought is of the ultimate ground

of their religious life, not as in i. 19, 21, iii. 8, 12, of union with Christ, but of the holy presence of God himself in their life. It was a thought to deepen their reverence and "fear" of God, but also to give them strength in their faithful endeavours. "*God worketh in you* ; your life rests in him ; it is of his grace that you are what you are. So with perfect freedom and gladness of heart you may be *true to yourselves*, and live out your best life. He quickens both the inward impulses and the practical energies of the higher life ; not to render unnecessary your strenuous will and work, but to give you confidence in them. He is there in the secret places of your life. As you trust in him you will find that his strength, his invigorating, purifying Spirit, quickens your life." If it were not so, the human will could avail nothing for the deeper spiritual life (*Rom.* ix. 16). As it is, we have to put forth all our strength (*1 Cor.* ix. 24), not to be troubled by any subtle questions as to how much is of the divine grace and how much of ourselves, but simply doing what we know it is our duty to do.

"The working *in us* is God's part ; the working *out*, in word, act, thought and character, is ours. God puts into the heart the suggestions, the promptings, the aspirations, the commanding sense of Right, which point the way that He would have us to go. The inspiration is our Father's ; the holy desire, the merciful impulse, the fair vision of Good, proceed from His Spirit : what He asks from us is the energy to be fellow-workers with Him in these given directions for the sake of fuller union with Himself. . . . It is as true of our personal intercourse with God as it is of our intercourse with men,

that one spirit has the power of veiling itself against another; and even God could not force Himself upon us without destroying the freedom and self-determination which make us spiritual beings. We can quench His Spirit if we will. The impulse that is long disregarded seems to retire from the heart, not because God ceases to be there, but because the heart becomes insensible" (Thom's *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, i., p. 92, "Ours to work out what God works in us").

"There are impulses from the spirit, promptings from within, which are not properly *ours* until we have made them so, by breathing and living and having our being within their inspiration. They come by no effort and from no merit of our own; they are of *God's* grace, and make no part of our individual personality until we appropriate them by entire fidelity of being. . . . Man's province is not that of supplying himself with inspirations, but that of earnest and loyal obedience, against the resistance of lower inclinations, to those which God supplies" (*ibid.*, p. 118, "The Spirit willing, the Flesh weak"). Cp. also p. 347, "Loving God with our Strength;" and the end of the essay on "Prayer," in *Christ the Revealer*. Also Dr. Martineau's *Hours of Thought*, ii., p. 205, the end of the first sermon on *Christ the Divine Word*.

His good pleasure. The same word as in i. 15, "goodwill." To fulfil the purpose of his love God has called us into being, and gives us grace to do his will, as children of our Father in heaven.

ii. 14. **Without murmurings and disputings** (or, *questionings*). Murmurings against God, and questionings as to the justice and mercy of his dealings with

them. Or if *disputings* be read, the reference would be to contentions among themselves, as in iv. 2. This seems to be the meaning in 1 *Tim.* ii. 8. But in the present passage the thought seems to be of their attitude toward God. Murmuring against God was the constant fault of the Israelites in the wilderness, to which Paul refers in 1 *Cor.* x. 10. Their warning example was very likely in his mind here also (cp. *Exod.* xvi. 7; *Num.* xiv. 2). "The slave may murmur, but what *son* will murmur who, while working for his Father, works also for himself?"—(*Chrysostom.*)

ii. 15. **Blameless and harmless** (or rather, *pure, without guile*). The two words refer to the character as it affects others and as it is in itself.

Children of God without blemish. In the Song of Moses (*Deut.* xxxii. 5) it is said of the Israelites: "They are not his children, it is their blemish; they are a perverse and crooked generation." *Without blemish* was a term constantly applied in the Old Testament to the victims which were fit for sacrifice. So of Christ in 1 *Peter* i. 19, and of the character of the disciples (*Eph.* i. 4, v. 27; *Col.* i. 22).

Among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, luminaries. Although the word is different the thought is the same as in *Matt.* v. 14-16.

Holding forth the word of life, not so much by preaching in the narrower sense, but showing the truth of the Gospel, of their spiritual sonship, in actual life.

ii. 16. **That I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ.** "*Against the day of Christ*" (*Lightfoot*). That by their faithfulness his glorying or rejoicing may be secured for the time of the consummation of Christ's

kingdom (see the notes on i. 6 and 10). The phrase "the day of Christ" is peculiar to this epistle. Elsewhere it is "the day of the Lord" (cp. 1 *Thess.* ii. 19; 1 *Cor.* iv. 3-5; 2 *Cor.* i. 14).

That I did not run in vain neither labour in vain. The life of Christian endeavour and labour in the ministry is pictured as a race. So also in iii. 13, 14; *Gal.* ii. 2; 1 *Cor.* ix. 26.

ii. 17. **Yea, and if I am offered** (or, *poured out as a drink-offering*) **upon the sacrifice and service of your faith.** So closely in his affectionate desire for their perseverance does Paul identify himself and his labours with them, that now when the thought of his own death occurs to him, which he knows may come at any time, he speaks of it also as though it would be just the perfecting of *their* work. And such a consummation, he says, would be matter only for rejoicing. The image (according to Lightfoot) is of the Philippians as priests, in their faithful discipleship, offering a sacrifice and religious service to God, and Paul's own death, the shedding of his blood, is a drink-offering poured out to complete the sacrifice.* On the other hand, it is urged by Meyer

* In the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians there is a somewhat similar image, only the disciples are there spoken of not as the priests, but as the altar of God, while their own inward life is the offering laid upon the altar.

"Our widows must be sober-minded as touching the faith of the Lord, making intercession without ceasing for all men, abstaining from all calumny, evil speaking, false witness, love of money, and every evil thing, knowing that they are God's altar, and that all sacrifices are carefully inspected, and nothing escapeth Him either of their thoughts or intents, or any of the secret things of the heart" (§ 4, *Lightfoot's Translation.* Cp. 1 *Cor.* iii. 16, 17, vi. 19).

and Vaughan that as in *Rom.* xv. 16 Paul speaks of his work in bringing the Gentiles into the new spiritual kingdom as the offering of a sacrifice in religious service, so here he regards himself as the priest, who in quickening their faith is offering such a sacrifice, and by his death will perfect it. As in the preceding verse he has already turned to the thought of his own labours, this perhaps is the more likely interpretation (cp. also *2 Tim.* iv. 6).

Upon the sacrifice would mean that the drink-offering was poured over the altar as a heathen libation, and the sacrifice would be the victim, not the act of sacrificing. Writing from Rome to a church composed largely of heathen converts, this would be quite appropriate. But a rendering equally allowable is *at the sacrifice*, accompanying it; and Paul may have had in mind the Jewish rite, in which the drink-offering is poured not upon but "about the altar" (Josephus, *Ant.*, III. ix. 4), and then the sacrifice will be the act of offering.

The service is the same word as in *Luke* i. 23; the priestly service of Zacharias.

If this should really happen as the outcome of his imprisonment (for in spite of the confidence expressed in i. 25, Paul knows that it may be so), he wants them to feel with him that it will be the crowning of his joy in the service of the Gospel, for the greater triumph of their faith.

I joy and rejoice with you all. It will really be joy to me not only to die, but to think that my death will help you; and I rejoice with you, or rather *congratulate* you, that so it will be.

ii. 18. **And do you also joy and rejoice with me.** Be thankful for this strengthening and consecration which you will receive through my death; and do not regret the cause, or be sad for me; but rather rejoice for me, congratulate me on such an ending of my labours.

II. 19-30. PAUL'S INTENTION AS TO SENDING TIMOTHY TO PHILIPPI, AND THE REFERENCE TO EPAPHRODITUS, THEIR MESSENGER, WHO IS TO CARRY BACK THIS LETTER.

ii. 19. **I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy** (cp. note on i. 1, 2).

ii. 20. **For I have no man like-minded,** no one else among those about him, who could be sent on such a mission, whom he could fully trust to minister to them as he would desire. Lightfoot and others explain, *like-minded with Timothy*, such as he is, fit to be sent. So Dr. Martineau, *Hours of Thought*, i., p. 87.

Who will truly (or, *genuinely*) **care for your state.** A.V., *naturally*, is a different meaning of the same word, *i.e.*, belonging to the race, "as a true spiritual child of mine (like Timothy) would care." Then the "like-minded" would refer to Paul.

ii. 21. **For they all seek their own.** This condemnation must not be extended to all the disciples in Rome, but only to those about Paul, who might possibly have acted as his messengers. If "Luke, the beloved physician," was with Paul during some part of the Roman imprisonment (*Philem.* 24; *Col.* iv. 14); he can hardly have been there when this letter was written. Of disciples whom Paul may have used from time to time as messengers to the different churches, some may have

been regularly engaged in business, and on journeys in connection with their own affairs may have carried the Apostle's letters, and, as occasion served, have ministered to the churches to which they came. Even Paul himself we know worked at his trade at any rate during some periods of his ministry. But not all the disciples were perfectly devoted to "the things of Jesus Christ," as Paul was, who only used his trade to keep himself more free for the service of the Gospel. So if at this time Paul had asked or thought of asking some of those about him to go through Macedonia, and to visit the churches there, if he found that some business engagement or interest made them hesitate and be unwilling to make the needed sacrifice, and there was no one but Timothy to whom he could confidently appeal, in his disappointment he might naturally have uttered the expression of the text.

ii. 22. Ye know the proof of him that as a child serveth a father. His faithfulness has been tested through all these years (cp. i. 1; 1 Cor. iv. 17).

ii. 23. So soon as I shall see how it will go with me, expecting that soon he will be able to see more clearly the probable result of his trial, and hoping (ver. 24) that it will bring his own speedy release. But if he thought that death was near, he would not wish to be separated from his "child."

ii. 25. But I counted it necessary. Epaphroditus is to carry this letter to them, and in writing Paul pictures to himself the messenger already arrived and the letter being read to the assembled church. So he speaks of the compulsion of his warm sympathies and the desire of Epaphroditus to return as already in the past (cp. *Philem.*

11-13, to show that Onesimus was the bearer of the letter). The name Epaphroditus was common at that time, but all our knowledge of this Philippian messenger is derived from the present passage and iv. 18 (cp. *Introd.*, p. 20). There is no reason for identifying him with the Epaphras of *Colossians* and *Philemon*.

My brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier. Epaphroditus, having brought the gifts to Paul at Rome, seems to have stayed awhile, helping in the work of the Gospel, so that Paul came to know his worth, and could speak thus of him, as having shared in the labour and warfare of his ministry.

Your messenger and minister to my need, the bringer of their gifts. As in 2 *Cor.* ix. 12, generous giving is spoken of as in a sense ministry, religious service.

ii. 26. Some messenger must have gone to Philippi during his illness, and he knew that the friends at home would have heard and be anxious about him.

ii. 28. **That I may be the less sorrowful,** that I may not have this additional sorrow of knowing your anxiety on his behalf.

ii. 30. **Because for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death.** This can hardly mean that his illness was due to the fatigues of the journey in coming to Paul; it must have come through overwork, or perhaps some ill-usage, in his ministry at Rome.

Hazarding his life. The word so translated appears in the name *Parabolani*, brotherhoods who in the early church devoted themselves in time of pestilence, at the risk of life, to the care of the sick and the burial of the dead. A.V. *not regarding*, despising, his life, is the translation of another text.

To supply that which was lacking in your service toward me, that is, the personal ministrations, in addition to the gifts he brought, and which Paul knows that they would be glad to supply. A.V. *to supply your lack of service*, does not give the full meaning of something added to service which they had rendered (cp. 1 Cor. xvi. 17).

III.—1-16. WARNING AGAINST FALSE JUDAISING TEACHERS,
AND THE TESTIMONY OF HIS OWN LIFE-EXPERIENCE AS
SHOWING THE TRUE METHOD AND AIM OF CHRISTIAN
DISCIPLESHIP.

iii. 1. Finally, my brethren, "for the rest," as though he were drawing to the conclusion of the letter, as in 1 Thess. iv. 1; 2 Thess. iii. 1; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Eph. vi. 10. Sometimes, as in 1 Thess., a considerable portion of the letter follows. But in the present case it would almost seem that some fresh suggestion leads Paul to enter upon a new train of thought, and only afterwards in chap. iv. to return to the exhortations with which he had intended to conclude; and then once more (iv. 8) to repeat the expression which marks the approaching end of the letter.

Rejoice in the Lord. The exhortation to rejoice is one of the prevailing notes of this epistle. But the word was also used commonly both for salutation and farewell, so that here, as in 2 Cor. xiii. 11, the meaning may be simply *farewell*. But as with genuine feeling we may sometimes use conventional expressions such as "good-bye" (God be with you) or "God bless you" at parting,

with a tone that expresses all the deeper meaning of the words, so here Paul in using a common phrase of farewell may have brought back into it the full meaning of the exhortation to rejoice, to be of good cheer. And certainly in iv. 4 the exhortation to rejoice is clearly emphasised. Here again, as in i. 14, ii. 19, 24, 29, etc., the remembrance of the spirit of Christian fellowship finds expression.

To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not irksome, but for you it is safe. But what are the things which Paul does not find it irksome or tedious to repeat, since it is well that they should be impressed again and again on the Philippians? One of two explanations is the more probable. Either he is about to return to the question of unity, which he has before dwelt upon in this letter, and which he takes up again in chap. iv., so that the rest of chap. iii. must be regarded as a digression, suggested by some unexpected interruption after the words were written (which is Lightfoot's explanation); or (as Meyer and others hold) in some previous letters to the Philippians, no longer extant, Paul had already warned them against the Judaisers, so that the subject is familiar to them, and perhaps even the very phrases, which he immediately uses concerning them. Lightfoot acknowledges that there is no intrinsic improbability in there having been other letters to the Philippians which are now lost, but prefers the other explanation of this passage, because it accounts for the difficulty of the expression without making any assumption beyond the range of the letter which we possess.

iii. 2. Beware of the dogs. Literally, *look to, mark*. The same word as in *Mark* iv. 24: "Give heed what ye

hear." *Dog* was a term of reproach or abuse to Jew and Greek alike, to the former suggesting chiefly impurity, to the latter impudence. By the Jews of that time the term was commonly applied to the Gentiles, and so may well have been used by the Jewish Christians of Paul's Gentile converts. And now, as with the following "circumcision," Paul reverses the description, and speaks of the Judaisers as dogs. The expression seems harsh and startling as we read it. But the impression will be somewhat modified by either of the suggested interpretations of the passage. If Paul is here repeating warnings that he has already given in other letters, and perhaps dwelt upon when at Philippi, his readers would at once understand his meaning, for the phrase will have been familiar to them. And on the theory of some interruption which turns the current of the Apostle's thought, and leads him to this fresh subject, the very abruptness of the opening shows the strength of his indignation, perhaps at some new instance of the intolerance or calculating malice of Judaisers in Rome or elsewhere, that has just been reported to him; and this leads him to picture vividly the harm that might be done at Philippi, if such influences should gain any foothold there.

Evil workers Not evil-doers in a general moral sense, but as in *2 Cor. xi. 13*, those who laboured in the church on false principles or from unrighteous motives.

The concision, mere bodily mutilation. To the true Christian there could be no more than this in the rite of circumcision on which the Jews laid so much stress, and which the Judaisers among the Christians had

sought to impose upon all converts (*Gal.* ii. 3, etc., vi. 12-16). The contemptuous use of the like-sounding term, concision for circumcision, Lightfoot illustrates by some English parallels, *e.g.*, the ambassador's complaint that he had been sent not to Spain, but to Pain, and Leicester's description of the English troops in the Netherlands, that the Queen's poor subjects were no better than abjects.

iii. 3. We are the circumcision, the true circumcision, the people who in the new spiritual life, as Christians, glorying in Christ, knowing that in him is revealed the glory of God, are separated from whatever is foul and unrighteous. For the contrast between the flesh and the spirit cp. *Rom.* ii. 25-29. There are similar expressions in the Old Testament, *e.g.*, *Lev.* xxvi. 41; *Deut.* xxx. 6; *Jer.* vi. 10; *Ezek.* xlv. 7.

Have no confidence in the flesh, not trusting in the mere fact of Jewish birth, or any outward ordinances, but only in the new spirit of life in Christ.

iii. 4-7. If there were really anything to be gained by "confidence in the flesh" Paul might have had it, and he enumerates the points of his Jewish origin and education to prove the fact. Every advantage which the Jews claimed as a peculiar people he himself possessed to the full, but had set it all aside as of no avail. And then he goes on to show that he has found what is far better (cp. 2 *Cor.* xi. 22, ff.; *Gal.* i. 13, 14, ii. 15; *Rom.* ix. 3-5, xi. 1).

iii. 4. I yet more. Few among the Jewish Christians could claim such advantages as Paul had "in the flesh," or such a record of faithful zeal.

iii. 5. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of

Israel, so born a Jew, and not merely a proselyte, as many of his opponents may have been.

Of the tribe of Benjamin, so in *Rom.* xi. 1. The tribe from which came the first king of Israel, and which alone remained faithful to Judah at the time of the disruption.

A Hebrew of Hebrews. As *Jew* is opposed to *Greek*, so *Hebrew* to *Hellenist*. The Hellenists were Jews who had so far surrendered to the influences of Greek civilisation, in Alexandria and other cities where they had settled, as to adopt the language and to some extent the social habits of that dominant race. They used the Greek translation of their ancient Scriptures, the *Septuagint*, and the more thoughtful of them (*e.g.* Philo of Alexandria) were largely influenced by Greek philosophy. Even the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews quotes chiefly from the Septuagint. But Paul had no such foreign influence in his origin or rearing. He was a Hebrew, of Hebrew parents and ancestors; he received a strictly Jewish education, and spoke Hebrew (*Acts* xxii. 2, 3), and when he quotes in his letters from the Old Testament he does not use the Septuagint, but seems to translate for himself from the original.

As touching the law, a Pharisee (*Acts* xxiii. 6, xxvi. 5), one of the party, "the separatists," who were fanatical in their strictness in keeping the law and "the tradition of the elders" in its minutest details (*cp. Matt.* xxiii., and *Carpenter's Life in Palestine*, § 38, p. 137).

iii. 6. As touching zeal, persecuting the church (*Gal.* i. 13, 14; *1 Cor.* xv. 9). "The church" here, as in *Matt.* xvi. 18; *1 Cor.* xii. 28; *Eph.* i. 22; *Col.* i. 18, 24, means the whole body of the Christian believers. Paul persecuted the disciples wherever he found them. Else-

where the word means one special company of believers assembled together, a particular congregation (1 Cor. xi. 18, xiv. 19, 23), or belonging to some particular place (Rom. xvi. 1, 5, 16; 1 Cor. xi. 16; Acts viii. 1, xiv. 23, 27). The word in the original, which the Latin form *ecclesia* (in our *ecclesiastic*, etc.) exactly reproduces, meant in original Greek usage *an assembly of people*, and so was used in the Septuagint of the assembly or congregation of the Israelites, whether met for specially religious or other purposes. Hence it passed into Christian use for the gathering of the disciples for worship, and in general as a religious society. Our word *church* (*kirk*, German *kirche*) is probably derived from a Greek word (in ecclesiastical use) meaning *the Lord's house*, and only in a secondary sense applied to the assembly that met in the sacred building.

iii. 6. As touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless. Such righteousness as could be obtained from obedience to the old law Paul had. No one could have charged the ardent Pharisee with overstepping any of the commandments. But it could not satisfy him, even at that time. He was not like the Pharisee of the parable (*Luke* xviii. 9-14). And if with something of the temper of the young ruler (*Luke* xviii. 21) he thought in his zealous persecution of the Christians to have found what more was needed, he very soon was brought to see his error, and was led into a better way. (For the true righteousness cp. note on ver. 9.)

iii. 7. Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Whatever advantage, pleasure or confidence he may have had formerly in the thought of his Jewish birth and exemplary conduct,

whatever store he or others may have set on those things, it is all as nothing now that the better way is clear. Such things must be altogether set aside for the sake of Christ. They are only hindrances, concealing the real issue of the religious life. And in the following passage (vv. 8-14) Paul describes more fully what he means by glorying in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh (ver. 3). The passage is of great interest as showing what Christ was to him, the inspiration of his whole life. It puts the matter in a somewhat different way from the earlier passage, i. 12-16, where Paul shows how his life is given up to the service of Christ, his chief care in all things being the progress of the Gospel.

iii. 8. I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord. Still further emphasising the supreme worth of the knowledge of Christ, and life in him as the treasure beyond price. Not merely those old Jewish advantages must be given up, but everything that might in any way interfere with his free growth in the new spiritual life, in union with Christ by faith (i. 2, 21; Gal. ii. 20): *My Lord*, as in i. 3, expressing his sense of the intimacy of the relation. "He calls him his Lord to express the vehemence of his affection" (*Calvin*).

For whom I suffered the loss of all things, breaking with all the traditions of his past, renouncing all his old hopes, his growing reputation among his own people, and all old friendships.

And do count them but dung, useless refuse.

That I may gain Christ, and be found in him. By his first conviction of faith he was received as a disciple

into the new fellowship of Christ, and willingly suffered the loss of all the treasures of his past. From that time his one desire was more perfectly to possess Christ, to have in himself more of the true life, so that he may be perfected "unto the day of Christ" (cp. i. 21 and 10). The meaning is more fully developed in what follows.

iii. 9. Not having as my righteousness that which is of the law. This translation, which is in the margin of the R.V., is better than the text of either the R.V. or the A.V. He has learnt that such righteousness is of no avail to give real satisfaction and confidence that the service of his life is accepted and approved of God. The true righteousness is of a different kind.

That which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith (cp. *Rom.* iii. 21-31, v. 1-11, etc.; *Gal.* ii. 16-21, iii. 10-14; 2 *Cor.* v. 17-19. Drummond's *Spiritual Religion*, p. 195). Paul's constant plea is that salvation is to be gained only by faith, and not by works. Under the old Law men thought to be justified, to be counted as righteous, to be accepted of God, through the merit of their own obedience. But Paul had found such an aim to be altogether futile. The self-satisfied Pharisee might imagine that he kept the Law perfectly and was blameless in the sight of God but the more conscientious a man was, and the further he saw into the meaning of holiness and righteousness, the more hopeless would such efforts be. Then it was made clear to Paul that the old method of aiming at righteousness had been condemned. For Christ had been put to death under the old Law, but had been raised from the dead, and declared to be "the Son of God with power;" and in him God was showing to the

world a new way of life. The divine approval, peace of mind, such righteousness of life as could satisfy the reverent and humble soul,—these were not to be gained by a laborious obedience to the many precepts of the Law. The one great need is to see that the love of God is there from the beginning. It has simply to be known and received into the heart, not as the end to be gained by long and strenuous effort, but as the beginning of a true religious life.

This was what Christ showed to the world, the true spirit in which men are to live as children of God. Through him, through faith in Christ, the disciples gained a new and deeper faith in God and knowledge of his love. And with the joy and confidence such knowledge gives they gained a new impulse for faithful service. Their works of righteousness were not less, but more. For they had now in their hearts the true motive power for the conduct of life. Their righteousness was as much the fruit of moral effort as before, only of better quality, because springing from the confidence of their faith. It was truly "of God," not gained by isolated effort of their own or due to merit such as they could pride themselves upon, but the outcome of their reverent thankfulness and trust, the service of unclouded love (cp. also note on ii. 13). Those who have such a life are not "under law," but "under grace" (cp. note on *grace*, i. 2; and Dr. J. F. Clarke's *Ideas of the Apostle Paul*, ch. vi., "Antagonism of Law and Grace"). They see all things in the light of divine love; although they are not yet made perfect, they are without fear. Their faith is their salvation. They know that they are being led in the right way of life.

Paul speaks of these things not from tradition or theory alone, but from his own living experience. He had sorely needed deliverance, and had found it in Christ. He *knows* that in this true faith there is salvation. He saw it first in the disciples whom he persecuted, and then it mastered *him*. Therefore it is that he pleads with such passionate earnestness, and is so jealous of any interference or perversion of the integrity of his gospel.

“O slave devout of burdened Hebrew school,
Proud to fulfil each time-exalted rule,
How broke the illusion of thy swelling wrath
On that meek front of calm, enduring faith !

Then flashed it on thy spirit mightily
That thou hadst spurned a love that died for thee !
And all the pride went down in whelming flood
Of boundless shame and boundless gratitude.

What large atonement that great conscience pays !
For every wounding slight, a psalm of praise ;
Unending worship shall the debt consume ;
For hours of rage, a life of martyrdom.

Yet in such morning glow, such vital day,
What chilling sense of claim or debt can stay ?
O wondrous power of noble love, to free
From binding Law to glorious Liberty !”

SAMUEL JOHNSON (*American*).

A striking parallel to this experience of Paul's in finding the new way of life through faith in Christ may be seen in the early spiritual struggles of the great Reformer, Martin Luther. Both men, as it seems, sought for peace through obedience to Law, but found none ; with continued failure growing more desperately earnest in their

efforts, until the new light dawned, and showed them more clearly what is the Father's will for his children. Both found peace at last, not by any supreme effort of their own, but by ceasing to struggle in the old mistaken way, and as Christ had shown the new way, letting the sunlight of God's love fill their hearts and make them new men.

Luther was brought up in a pious home, governed by all the conceptions of the mediæval Catholic Church. An ordinary secular life could not satisfy his intense earnestness, and he became a monk. By the practices of ascetic piety, by self-abasement in penance and the most menial services, he sought for peace with God ; but to no purpose. He was the most exemplary of monks, trusted and honoured by the heads of his order, wondered at by all the brethren. He brought himself near to death by the extremity to which he carried his penances and fasting, so that people thought, "Who could be more pious than brother Martin ?" And yet he found no peace. He was restless and unsatisfied in spirit. For how could he be sure that he had done enough ? The very eagerness of his conscientious efforts became his torment. He was ready to believe himself abandoned, cast off by God. Then a wise friend pointed out to him those words of Paul's, "The just shall live by faith," and they took hold of him. He saw that he had been attempting what was impossible, and in his blind zeal in an outward service had missed entirely the life-giving secret of the Gospel. He had been trying to do everything for himself, to win God's favour by his own efforts. But that was not the way. That was not the way in which a Father deals with his children. They have not to win his love. It is

theirs from the beginning. They have but to accept it, and let it rule in their hearts. Then they understand his will as never before, and have a new power to do it. Love makes all things possible to them. So Luther came to understand the central truth of the Gospel, and found deliverance out of his troubles. The love of God was freely offered to the world in Christ. Through faith in Christ the disciple received it into his heart. And so again *salvation by faith* became the watchword of a new Reformation.

The doctrine, though inspiring, is not without danger, and among some sections of the followers of Luther led to great abuse. "What is to prevent the practical abuse of this doctrine by men who accept it on authority, without being conscious of its efficacy in their own hearts, or discerning its justification in facts of human nature? It is a doctrine which fires and fortifies great saints, but is terribly apt to delude common men with a show of religion. What guarantee can there be in any particular case that faith is that transforming passion of the soul which really makes it one with Christ, and not a cool adherence of the intellect, or a passing spasm of excitement, either quite unable to produce such an effect? While if, on the one hand, faith have worked no spiritual change—if, on the other, the moral law have been systematically disparaged—into what hideous mockery of true religion may not men fall who are cherishing all the while the conviction of their most perfect orthodoxy!" (Beard's Hibbert Lectures, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, Lecture IV., p. 132).

It may sometimes appear from what Paul says of the need only of faith and not of works, as though he were

indifferent to the practical conduct of life and the conditions of ordinary morality. It is a suggestion that he himself indignantly denied (cp. esp. *Rom.* vi.). But his doctrine was afterwards abused in that way by men who made what they called their faith, and their supposed spiritual security, an excuse for lawless and shameful sensuality. There may be a reference to such in vv. 18, 19, and the later *Antinomians*, "the lawless ones," appealed to Paul's authority in justification of their position. The Apostle's own life was a direct contradiction to any such insinuation of moral indifference; while this passage and iv. 8, 9, and many others in his letters (*e.g.*, *Rom.* xii.; *1 Cor.* xiii.; *2 Cor.* iv.-vi. 10; *Gal.* v. 13-vi. 10; *1 Thess.* v. 12-24), show how truly in the spirit of his Master the faithful disciple understood the claims of genuine righteousness of life.

iii. 10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection. Paul describes further the condition of his new life in Christ. To know him, he repeats, is the great thing; and that includes knowing *the power of his resurrection*. This was not only the power of faith in the risen Christ, in his victory over death, as proving to mankind the wider reach of their spiritual life, but also the practical effect of their present fellowship with him, the glorified Lord (cp. ver. 20), teaching them to "rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things" (cp. *Rom.* vi. 4-11; viii. 9-17; *1 Cor.* xv. 12-23; *2 Cor.* v. 14, 15. And in the *Psalms and Litanies* of Rowland Williams, *Fourth Litany*: "May we partake of His life, and rise out of sorrow; rise out of despair and fretfulness; rise in prayer and trustfulness; rise in spiritual power and life. . . . May He breathe on us holier

power, and unite us to Himself and to our brethren, of every name, colour, and opinion, with sympathy in all sanctity and right, with faith of sins forgiven, a lively hope of rising out of every evil, and of eternal life before God").

And the fellowship of his sufferings. The disciple must be as his Lord (1 *Peter* iv. 13; *Matt.* xx. 22). To be glorified with Christ he must first learn to suffer with him (*Rom.* viii. 17; 2 *Cor.* vi. 3-10; *Gal.* ii. 20. And in the *Imitatio Christi*, Bk. II., chs. xi. and xii., "Of the King's Highway of the Holy Cross").

Becoming conformed unto his death, in the faithful experience of a life of suffering (2 *Cor.* iv. 10-14), not referring especially to a martyr's death at the end of his earthly service, but to the "dying daily" of self-renunciation and cheerful suffering for the sake of the Gospel. "For our sakes He endured all things, that we might live in Him. Let us then become imitators of His endurance; and if we should suffer for His name's sake, let us glorify Him. For He gave this example to us in His own person, and we believed this" (*Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians*, § 8, Lightfoot's translation).

"Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
If He's not born in thee, thy heart is still forlorn.
The Cross on Golgotha will never save thy soul :
The Cross in thine own heart alone can make thee whole."

ANGELUS SILESIVS (1624-77).

iii. 11. **If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead** (not *of the dead*, A.V., which is a different reading of the text). The conception here is not of all the dead rising for the final judgment, but of the rising of "the dead in Christ" (1 *Thess.* iv. 16),

"those that are Christ's" (1 Cor. xv. 23), from among the dead, to the new life in his kingdom. The sentence expresses a wistful looking forward to the consummation of a faithful life. "*If so be I may attain*" (*Lightfoot*). It does not mean that Paul is anxious or doubtful of the end, but that this is the constant tenor of his life, this reaching forward towards the perfecting of his discipleship (cp. the following verse, and i. 20, 21, ii. 13).

iii. 12. Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect. The glorious prospect of the perfect life with Christ, in the spiritual fellowship of the sons of God, is opened to him through his faith; it is the goal set before the disciple; the promise of it is in his heart, making him a new man. But it must be gained through the discipline and faithful effort of his whole life (*Gal. v. 5*).

But I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus. Having entered upon the life of Christian faith, from the day of his conversion, which here he speaks of as being "apprehended," taken possession of by Christ, he presses on that he may on his part fulfil the purpose of divine mercy so made known to him, and gain possession of all the riches of the new life, as joint-heir with Christ (*Rom. viii. 17*). In *Gal. i. 16*, and 1 Cor. xv. 8, Paul speaks rather differently of his conversion, thinking of the first stage of his conviction, when it was made clear to him that Christ was risen and was indeed the living Son of God. Here he thinks rather of the result of that conviction. Christ being manifested to him, at once masters him, claiming his obedience, and becoming in him a "life-giving spirit." Cp. Dr. Drummond's sermon

on "Election" in *Spiritual Religion*, p. 203, and the remarkable testimony of the Hindu Theist, Protap Mozoomdar, in his *Oriental Christ* (Boston: 1883):—
"I was meditating on the state of my soul, on the cure of all spiritual wretchedness, the brightness and peace unknown to me, which was the lot of God's children. I prayed and besought Heaven. I cried and shed hot tears. It might be said I was almost in a state of trance. Suddenly it seemed to me—let me own it was revealed to me—that close to me there was a holier, more blessed, more loving personality, upon which I might repose my troubled head. Jesus lay discovered in my heart as a strange human kindred love, as a repose, a sympathetic consolation, an unpurchased treasure, to which I was freely invited. The response of my nature was unhesitating and immediate. Jesus, from that day, to me became a reality whereon I might lean. It was an impulse then, a flood of light, love and consolation. It is no longer an impulse now. It is a faith and principle, it is an experience verified by a thousand trials. It was not a bodily Christ then; it is much less a bodily emanation now. A character, a spirit, a holy, sacrificed, exalted self, whom I recognise as the true Son of God. According to my humble light I have always tried to be faithful to this inspiration. . . . My aspiration has been not to speculate on Christ, but to be what Jesus tells us all to be. . . . I can with perfect truth declare that it is the grace and activity of the indwelling presence of God alone whereto I am indebted for these experiences."

iii. 13. This progress of Christian endeavour is likened to a race, as also in 1 Cor ix. 24, 26.

The image that Paul has in his mind is of the race-course, at some of the great national games, which held a place of such importance in ancient Greek life. During his residence at Ephesus the Apostle may have witnessed such contests, and while he was at Corinth he may even have been present at the famous Isthmian Games. To the Corinthians the use of such imagery would be especially striking, but it would appeal to every one acquainted with Greek life at that time. "It must be remembered, in reading the Apostle's allusions, that, from the national character and religion of the Greeks, these games derived an importance which raised them above the degrading associations of modern times. . . . The *stadium*, or 'race-course,' of which he speaks, was not a mere resort for public amusement, but an almost sacred edifice, under the tutelage of the patron deity of the Ionian tribes, and surrounded by the most solemn recollections of Greece, its white marble seats rising like the foundation of a temple in the grassy slope where its outline may still be traced, under the shadow of the huge Corinthian citadel, which guards the entrance to the Peloponnesus. The *race* 'in which all run,' the pugilistic contests in which they strove *not* 'to beat the air,' were not merely exhibitions of bodily strength, but solemn trials of the excellence of the competitors in the 'gymnastic art,' which was to the Greeks one half of human education" (*Dean Stanley*, note on 1 *Cor.* ix. 24. Cp. also *Conybeare and Howson*, ch. xx.).

Forgetting the things which are behind, not his past life of zeal under the Law, but the successive stages of his Christian discipline ; leaving behind him each fresh

attainment like the land-marks on a race-course, only thinking of what is still before him.

iii. 14. I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. At the end of the race, at the goal, is the prize which the disciple wins, the perfected life of spiritual sonship, to which God has called him in Christ Jesus (*Rom. viii. 17, 29*).

An illustration of this temper will be found in Wordsworth's *Character of the Happy Warrior* :—

“Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright.

* * * * *

Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last
From well to better, daily self-surpast :
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, and sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause ;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause.”

iii. 15. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded. The word translated *perfect* is the same as in ver. 12, but cannot here mean complete attainment, but rather as in *1 Cor. ii. 6*, possession in matters of faith of the mind of full-grown men. “Those of us who are full-grown, no longer children, but free men in Christ, who see what this race of Christian endeavour and the life of faith really mean, let us be thus minded, let us keep in this mind, always to press forward” (*cp. 1 Cor. xiii. 10-12 ; Eph. iv. 13*).

And if in anything ye are otherwise minded, if there are points of conduct on which you are not so clear, and do not see how they are to be brought into line with your onward progress, having the sound basis of faith and the determination always to press on, God will make those other matters also clear to you.

We do not know what the special differences at Philippi were, which Paul is anxious to heal. They do not seem to have been matters of vital doctrinal importance. But there may have been parties or prominent members in the church equally conscientious and earnest, but insisting that their habit, perhaps in worship or in some method of work, was right, and inclined to risk the peace of the church for the sake of carrying their point. And Paul would have them be more humble, and see whether in their positive insistence they are really being true to their "high calling," or rather in pride are looking to "their own things." If they would surrender in all things to the true spirit of Christ, God would make these doubtful matters also clear to them. Here was a lesson for every generation against unrighteous passions and persecution in the church. It was thus noted by Robert Barclay, in his *Apology*, xiv. 5: "And indeed those that press persecution, and deny liberty of conscience, do thereby show themselves more the disciples of Mahomet than of Christ; and that they are noways followers of the Apostle's doctrine, who desired the Thessalonians to prove all things and hold fast that which was good (1 *Thess.* v. 21), and also saith, 'Unto such as are otherwise minded, God shall reveal it' (*Phil.* iii. 15); not that by beating and banishments it must be knocked into them."

iii. 16. Only, whereunto we have already attained, by that same rule let us walk, either referring to what he has just said as to constant progress in moral attainment, or perhaps more probably, as concluding the whole section, referring back to the starting-point of this exhortation, the warning against the Judaisers, and emphasising once more the necessity of the one sure foundation of their life in faith (cp. *Gal.* vi. 16). A.V. *let us mind the same things* represents an addition to the text, rejected as an interpolation in the R.V.

III. 17-21. WARNING AGAINST LAWLESS SENSUALISM, AND AN APPEAL TO THEIR HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP.

iii. 17. Be ye imitators together of me, "vie with each other in imitating me" (*Lightfoot*). Cp. *1 Thess.* i. 6; *2 Thess.* iii. 7, 9; *1 Cor.* iv. 16, xi. 1.

Even as ye have us for an ensample, that is, Paul and his immediate companions and fellow-workers, who are "like-minded," such as Timothy and Luke. They are to mark all who walk in that true way.

iii. 18. For many walk . . . the enemies of the cross of Christ. These are not the Judaisers of whom he has already warned the Philippians, but nominal members of his own churches, professing the liberty of Christ, but making it an excuse for lawless sensuality (cp. note on ver. 9). They are enemies of the cross, not because they deny its doctrine, but because their conduct belies the faith they profess. They have no fellowship with the sufferings of Christ (ver. 10). Such men calling themselves by the name of Paul brought disgrace on

his cause, and as false friends more bitterly grieved the Apostle than his open enemies.

iii. 19. Whose end is perdition. "The end of those things is death" (*Rom.* vi. 21; cp. also *Gal.* vi. 8). They cannot have any part in that resurrection from the dead (*iii.* 11).

Whose god is the belly (*Rom.* xvi. 18).

Whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. They even boast of this licence; thinking to show their superiority to the old Jewish strictness, they break out into shameful excesses, caring only for the pleasures of sense.

iii. 20, 21. No true disciple can give way to such shameful licence, for the law of the heavenly kingdom rules in him even while he is in the present earthly condition, as afterwards it shall be more perfectly manifested in the new life at the coming of Christ. "God is our Law; Christ is our Rule; and whilst no more free to follow inclinations that would draw us out of accord with *them*, we are liberated from all lower authority. Their service is then perfect freedom: we are no longer free to live to ourselves, because our will has passed into a higher life" (Thom's *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, ii., p. 345).

iii. 20. For our citizenship is in heaven. The word either means the state, the commonwealth (R.V. margin), to which the disciples belong, the heavenly Jerusalem (*Gal.* iv. 26), the kingdom of the Messiah, now in heaven, but hereafter to be manifested on earth at the coming of Christ, or it might mean "the functions which as citizens we perform," represented by the A.V. "our conversation." But the former seems more fitting here,

since the disciples were to perform still on earth the functions worthy of citizens of the heavenly kingdom (cp. i. 27; *Eph.* ii. 19; 2 *Cor.* v. 1-7).

From whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, from heaven (cp. note on i. 6; 1 *Thess.* i. 10, iv. 16, 17). Christ at his coming will be their Saviour from all their troubles of that age, and the imperfections and hindrances of their present earthly condition.

iii. 21. Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, the body of flesh and blood (which cannot inherit the kingdom of God), in which they suffer their present humiliation, contrasted with the glory that is to come. The humiliation is in the sufferings and indignities to which the disciples are subjected; not here referring to the moral struggle with the flesh, "the body of this death" (*Rom.* vii. 24). From that the disciple is already delivered by his faith. So A.V. "this vile body" is incorrect. Those who remained alive till the coming of Christ in his glory would be changed, and "clothed upon," with the spiritual body, "the habitation which is from heaven" (2 *Cor.* v. 2, 4; *Rom.* viii. 29; 1 *Cor.* xv. 52).

That it may be conformed to the body of his glory, the spiritual body, with which he was "clothed upon" when at his resurrection he was glorified.

According to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself. This power over the body is only one instance of the universal sovereignty of Christ (cp. ii. 11; 1 *Cor.* xv. 24-28; *Eph.* i. 19-23).

**IV. 1-7. FURTHER EXHORTATIONS TO STEADFASTNESS,
UNITY, AND A JOYFUL SPIRIT.**

WITH every new period of his letter the undaunted spirit of the "prisoner in the Lord" seems to rise higher, and his words to ring with a clearer tone of triumphant joy. With renewed emphasis of affection he presses his exhortations upon his friends, with fresh terms of endearment, addressing by name those to whom he would specially appeal. And now as he draws to a conclusion, his heart overflows with the wonderful gladness of the new life in the spirit, and he presses upon them one thought after another of the deeper things of the inward life, appealing to all that is most inspiring to the heart of man, and so ends with the assurance of divine peace.

iv. 1. Wherefore so stand fast, seeing that there is this glorious prospect for those who are faithful to their heavenly citizenship.

My brethren beloved and longed for (cp. i. 8).

My joy and crown. So also in writing to the Thessalonians (1 *Thess.* ii. 19). The crown of victory or honour, not of dominion (cp. ii. 16; 1 *Cor.* ix. 25). As they would be like a crown of honour to him "in the day of Christ," so now being confident in their faithfulness he speaks of them as such.

iv. 2. Here, according to Lightfoot, the Apostle at length returns from his long digression to the subject of unity to which he was proceeding at iii. 1. Or if we adopt the other explanation of iii. 1, after dealing with the important subject of the false teachers (having been led perhaps to write at greater length on this point than

he at first intended), and urging the Philippians in general to steadfastness, he now takes up again the special exhortation to unity, of which he knows there is so much need.

I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, two women who very likely held prominent positions in the Philippian church, who had laboured with Paul in the work of the Gospel (ver. 3); but now, as Epaphroditus will have told him, by mutual jealousy or differences of opinion or habit, were endangering the peace of the community.

To be of the same mind in the Lord, to live in Christian concord (cp. ii. 2. As to the social position of women in Macedonia, see *Introd.*, pp. 7, 9).

iv. 3. I beseech thee also, true yokefellow. It is doubtful who is meant in this address. The old suggestion that it is Paul's wife or Lydia is inadmissible, because the form of the adjective is masculine; and besides, from *1 Cor.* vii. 8, it seems clear that Paul was unmarried or a widower. Lightfoot thinks that Epaphroditus is meant, as perhaps the writer to whom Paul is dictating the letter, and as the bearer of it to Philippi. Meyer and others regard "yokefellow," Syzygus, as a proper name; so that there is a play upon the meaning of the name (as in *Philem.* 11, "Onesimus [that is, Helpful], who was aforetime unprofitable to thee"). "Thou also, true Syzygus, yokefellow truly so called." Such a name is not, however, found elsewhere. It has also been suggested, but not with much likelihood, that it might be the chief presbyter or bishop of Philippi.

With Clement also. Thinking of how those women had helped him in his work at Philippi, brings back also other fellow-workers to Paul's mind, whom he mentions, following that natural suggestion of his thought, in grateful

memory, and perhaps with the further wish to engage them also in the effort of conciliation. This Clement, from the time of Origen and Eusebius, was commonly identified with the Apostolic Father of that name, an early bishop of Rome, who wrote a letter to the Corinthians. But there is really no ground for the conjecture. This Clement evidently belonged to the church at Philippi, and not to Rome.

Whose names are in the book of life, on the roll of the citizens of the heavenly kingdom. So *Luke* x. 20, "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven;" *Heb.* xii. 23, "The church of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven." Cp. also *Rev.* iii. 5, xiii. 8, xvii. 8, xx. 12, 15, xxi. 27, xxii. 19. It is a figure of speech used also in the Old Testament of the covenant-people or the righteous whom God regards (*Isa.* iv. 3; *Ezek.* xiii. 9; *Ps.* lxix. 28; *Exod.* xxxii. 32, 33. In *Dan.* xii. 1 it refers to the future life.

iv. 4. Rejoice in the Lord always (cp. note on iii. 1). Here it is distinctly an exhortation to rejoice, as one of the first duties of the Christian, rather than a word of farewell.

There is in these words the tone of clear, triumphant faith. It springs from a heart that is not ignorant of hardship and bitter trial, but having learnt to endure, finds that strength is made perfect in weakness. All the burden falls away with the thrill of new life in the spirit of trust and unclouded love, constantly refreshed from the exhaustless fountain of divine joy (cp. *2 Cor.* xii. 7-10, and *Isa.* xl. 28-31. Martineau's *Hours of Thought*, i., pp. 155, 160).

The world upon which Paul looked out from his

imprisonment was very different from ours. It had little indeed to show that could kindle hope. But then it was speedily to pass away, and all things should be made new. Therefore the very darkness of the present would add intensity to his faith and to his triumph in the thought of what was to be. Perhaps it is more difficult for us, because we are not permitted so to set aside any of the darker things of life, and we have to penetrate further in the searchings of our faith, before we reach the perennial fountain of joy. But none the less it is there, and we also may learn to respond to the Apostle's exhortation. Cp. the concluding lines of Tennyson's *Two Voices* :

“ To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
That every cloud that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

* * * * *

So variously seemed all things wrought,
I marvelled how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made choice
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, ' Rejoice ! Rejoice ! '

iv. 5. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. Gentleness (A.V. moderation), as opposed to “faction and vainglory,” and “looking each to his own things” (ii. 3, 4). So 1 *Tim.* iii. 3, a bishop is to be “gentle, not contentious ;” and in *James* iii. 17, “The wisdom that

is from above is first pure, then peaceable, *gentle*, easy to be intreated," etc; 2 Cor. x. 1, "I intreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." In Acts xxiv. 4 the word as applied to Felix is translated *clemency*. In Aristotle's *Ethics* the word denotes the temper which contents itself with less than its due, and shrinks from insisting on its due rights; and since this disposition as drawn by Aristotle has been said to be the nearest approach in any heathen writer to St. Paul's character of "charity" in 1 Cor. xiii., which the R.V. translates as "love," it is suggested by Dr. Vaughan that *charity* or *charitableness* should be the rendering in this place, so as to keep the word in this its best meaning still in our English Bible. This charity or gentleness springs naturally from joy in the Lord. "There is no joy in a narrow selfishness; joy involves an open heart, a generous love. Joy in the Lord tends to make men gentle and mild to others. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another*" (Vaughan).

This gentleness, *epieikeia*, as in 2 Cor. x. 1, is what Matthew Arnold so often speaks of as the *sweet reasonableness* of Christ, that crowning quality, which, added to his inwardness of method and his secret of self-renunciation in the service of righteousness, gave him his supreme place as the first of religious teachers among men. If the Philippians had possessed more of this virtue, there would have been less need for the Apostle's exhortations. "This mildness and sweet reasonableness it was which, stamped with the individual charm they had in Jesus Christ, came to the world as something new, won its heart and conquered it. Everyone

had been asserting his ordinary self and was miserable ; to forbear to assert one's ordinary self, to place one's happiness in mildness and sweet reasonableness, was a revelation. As men followed this novel route to happiness, a living spring opened beside their way, the spring of charity ; and out of this spring arose those two heavenly visitants, Charis and Irene, *Grace* and *Peace*, which enraptured the poor wayfarer, and filled him with a joy which brought all the world after him. And still whenever these visitants appear, as appear for a witness to the vitality of Christianity they daily do, it is from the same spring that they arise, and this spring is opened solely by the mildness and sweet reasonableness which forbears to assert one's ordinary self, nay, which even takes pleasure in effacing it " (M. Arnold, *St. Paul and Protestantism*, the essay on "Modern Dissent," p. 132 of the popular edition, 1887).

iv. 5. The Lord is at hand. In *1 Cor.* xvi. 22 Paul uses the Aramaic equivalent, *Maran atha*, "our Lord cometh." It may have been a kind of watchword among the disciples, which would be a warning to waverers and would rekindle drooping faith, keeping the disciples patient and hopeful, in their expectation of the speedy coming of Christ in his glory (cp. *James* v. 8). The words have, however, been differently interpreted in this place, "*the Lord is nigh*," referring to the constant spiritual presence of the Lord with his disciples. So it is frequently said of God, as in *Psalms* cxlv. 18, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him." But following on the exhortation to steadfastness and joyful faith, after what Paul has said of their labours all leading up to the consummation of the "day of Christ,"

the former interpretation seems the most appropriate here. Then having set that joyful hope clearly before them, he goes on to speak of the trustfulness and quietness they may have during the time of trial and waiting.

iv. 6. **In nothing be anxious** (*Matt.* vi. 34; *Luke* xii. 11; *1 Peter* v. 7). He has a right to utter this exhortation, who for so many years has given all that he has, with such noble carelessness of worldly things, to the service of Christ in the newly gathered churches. Not his chains, nor his impending trial, nor the shadow of death, can make him afraid or anxious for the morrow.

By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Again the duty of thankfulness is emphasised (cp. *1 Thess.* v. 18, "in all things give thanks," and repeatedly in Paul's letters). *Prayer* is the more general term, denoting the preparation of the spirit, the reverent drawing near to God; *supplication* the special asking in prayer for what is needed. The *requests* denote more particularly the contents of the supplication. For the two words *prayer* and *supplication*, cp. *Eph.* vi. 18; *1 Tim.* ii. 1, v. 5.

iv. 7. **The peace of God, which passeth all understanding.** The result of that trustful reliance upon God. So in ver. 9. Cp. *Isaiah* xxvi. 3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee," and the note on *grace and peace*, i. 2.

"Calm soul of all things ! make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of thine
Man did not make, and cannot mar.

The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others give !
Calm, calm me more ! nor let me die
Before I have begun to live."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Which passeth understanding, "which transcends every mind of man" (*Vaughan*), more wonderful than we can comprehend or fully describe in words (cp. *Eph.* iii. 19, 20). To the joy and trust and thankfulness of the disciples God will add this crowning gift of his unspeakable peace.

But possibly a different meaning should be given to this phrase. Lightfoot translates, "*surpassing every device or counsel of man, i.e., which is far better, which produces a higher satisfaction, than all punctilious self-assertion, all anxious forethought,*"—supposing that here also there is an indirect allusion to their dissensions. But has not Paul here penetrated too far into the deeper thought of the life with God to have those things any more in mind? So that if such a rendering of the phrase is to be adopted, it must be (as Meyer also holds), *which surpasses all understanding, all power of thought or reason*, as a protector of the heart and mind. The peace of God is far more effective for that end than any exercise of reason. It is not by searching that a man can find out God; not by any subtlety of argument will he be brought to the quietness and security of trust, but by inward conviction of the spirit (cp. *1 Cor.* ii. 10-16). If he has trust and thankfulness, the peace of God takes possession of the soul, and brings a deeper assurance than any argument of reason. "That is not the best and truest knowledge of God which is wrought

out by the labour and sweat of the brain, but that which is kindled within us, by an heavenly warmth in our hearts. . . . It is but a thin airy knowledge that is got by mere speculation, which is ushered in by syllogisms and demonstrations; but that which springs forth from true goodness, . . . brings such a divine light into the soul, as is more clear and convincing than any demonstration.* To have such knowledge is to have the peace of God, the witness of the Spirit with our spirit, that we are children of God. And so also we know the ultimate-reality of life in that which is pure and true and good. There is nothing in heaven or earth that can separate

* Smith's *Select Discourses*, 4th ed., p. 3, quoted in R. Barclay's *Apology*, ii., "Of Immediate Revelation." Barclay himself, especially in section xi., "Of Worship," records the very striking testimony of the religious life of early Friends to the reality and supreme worth of the inward spiritual evidence of divine truth: "As everyone is thus gathered, and so met together inwardly in their spirits, as well as outwardly in their persons, there the secret power and virtue of life is known to refresh the soul, and the pure motions and breathings of God's Spirit are felt to arise; from which, as words of declaration, prayers, or praises arise, the acceptable worship is known, which edifies the church, and is well pleasing to God. And no man here limits the Spirit of God, nor bringeth forth his own conned and gathered stuff; but everyone puts that forth which the Lord puts into their hearts: and it is uttered forth not in man's will and wisdom, but *in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit and of power*. Yea, though there be not a word spoken, yet is the true spiritual worship performed, and the body of Christ edified; yea, it may, and hath often fallen out among us, that divers meetings have passed without one word; and yet our souls have been greatly edified and refreshed, and our hearts wonderfully overcome with the secret sense of God's power and Spirit, which without words have been ministered from one vessel to another." And again, speaking of his own conversion: "Not a few have come to be convinced of

us from the love of God. So in Faber's lines on "the thought of God":

"O there is music in that thought
Unto a heart unstrung,
Like sweet bells at the evening time
Most musically rung.
Sweet thought ! lie closer to my heart,
That I may feel thee near,
As one who for his weapon feels
In some nocturnal fear.
The very thinking of the thought,
Without or praise or prayer,
Gives light to know, and life to do,
And marvellous strength to bear."

Shall guard your hearts and your thoughts. "God's peace shall stand sentry, shall keep guard over your the truth after this manner, of which I myself, in part, am a true witness, who, not by strength of arguments or by a particular disquisition of each doctrine, and conviction of my understanding thereby, came to receive and bear witness of the truth, but by being secretly reached by this life ; for when I came into the silent assemblies of God's people, I felt a secret power among them, which touched my heart, and as I gave way unto it, I found the evil weakening in me, and the good raised up, and so I became thus knit and united unto them, hungering more and more for the increase of this power and life, whereby I might feel myself perfectly redeemed. And indeed this is the surest way to become a Christian, to whom afterwards the knowledge and understanding of principles will not be wanting, but will grow up so much as is needful, as the natural fruit of this good root, and such a knowledge will not be barren or unfruitful. After this manner we desire therefore all that come among us to be proselyted, knowing that though thousands should be convinced in their understanding of all the truths we maintain, yet if they were not sensible of this inward life and their souls not changed from unrighteousness to righteousness, they could add nothing to us."

hearts" (*Lightfoot*). "To protect the heart from attack from without, and from perilous roving from within" (*Vaughan*). The thoughts (not *mind*, A.V.) in Paul's conception are in the heart and come out of the heart of man. Cp. 2 *Cor.* iii. 14, 15; and *Luke* ii. 35, where, however, the word rendered "thoughts" is different.

In Christ Jesus (not *through*, A.V.), as repeatedly in this letter and in other of Paul's writings, the whole life of the disciple, even this supreme gift of the peace of God, is in Christ. Through their fellowship with him in spirit they receive all the gifts of the Divine Spirit (cp. i. 2).

"With the temper and method of *our* lives identified with his, hid with his in God. The expression *through* or *in* Christ Jesus, implies that the garment of Peace will fit no spirit but his—that we must get more and more within the vesture of feelings, of personal relations, of filial and fraternal affections that united him to God and man. The knowledge of God that made it impossible to Christ to use any Name but that of Father; his Sense, at every point of the perishable surface of his life, that God was at its centre; the Obedience of his Love and of his Faith, these are the Elements of perfect Peace" (Thom's *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, ii., p. 9. Cp. also i., p. 378, "Quiet from God;" and Martineau's *Hours of Thought*, i., p. 329, "Rest in the Lord").

IV. 8, 9. A FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EXHORTATION AS TO THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

ALL these things the true disciple must think of; it is his nature or character to care for such things, and to *do* accordingly, as Paul has shown them by his own example. In ver. 8 we must not look for an exact logical classification of all the virtues, but only for an enumeration of those qualities which in the Apostle's thought were most closely connected with the grace of the Christian character. With this passage compare 2 *Cor.* vi. 1-10; *Gal.* v. 22, 23; 1 *Thess.* v. 12-24.

iv. 8. Whatsoever things are true, with the widest meaning of moral truth. Cp. 1 *John* i. 6, "If we walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not truth." Also *John* iii. 21; *Eph.* v. 9.

Honourable, worthy of reverence, and so denoting weight, dignity of character. In 1 *Tim.* ii. 2 the corresponding noun is translated *gravity*. A.V. *honest* is not so exact.

Just, again in the widest moral sense of righteousness.

Pure, stainless, without reproach, belonging to the pure in heart.

Lovely, that which is beloved or pleasing, the opposite of what is ugly and hateful. Cp. *Ecclus.* xx. 13, "A wise man by his words maketh himself beloved." To the Christian that which is beloved (in character) can only be the morally lovely.

Of good report. In 2 *Cor.* vi. 8 the noun occurs as "good report," opposed to "evil report." But the adjective, Lightfoot says, appears always to have

an active sense, so that here it will be *fair-speaking*, *gracious*, *winsome*, the opposite of abusive, scurrilous.

Neither of the words here translated *lovely* and *gracious* occurs again in the New Testament. The qualities for which they stand are akin to the forbearance or gentleness of ver. 5, and the meekness which Jesus calls blessed (*Matt.* v. 5). That *meekness* should be rather graciousness, gentleness, as opposed to what is vulgar and coarse. It is the same word as in 2 *Cor.* x. 1, the *mildness* of Matthew Arnold's phrase (cp. note on ver. 5). Dean Stanley quotes the French *débonnaire* as well expressing the meaning of courteous, chivalrous, and the saying of the old poet that Jesus was "the 'first true gentleman that ever breathed" (*Sermons to Children*, p. 113).

If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, whatsoever virtue there is, and whatsoever praise, or occasion of praising, words inclusive of those virtues already named, and any others there may be worthy to be reckoned with them. But Lightfoot suggests a different interpretation. The word here translated *virtue* is a common heathen term for moral excellence; but Paul seems to avoid its use, for it does not occur again in his writings, and elsewhere in the New Testament only in 1 *Peter* ii. 9 (where it means glory or praise), and 2 *Peter* i. 3, 5. Therefore it may be that Paul adds this expression at the end of his enumeration, as something of less worth, but so as to omit no possible ground of appeal, thus, "Whatever value may reside in your old heathen conception of virtue, whatever consideration is due to the praise of men."

iv. 9. The things which ye both learned (as your

lesson of Christian doctrine) **and received** (as the true gospel revelation) **and heard** (from my teaching by word of mouth) **and saw in me** (in the example of my own life, cp. i. 30), **these things do.**

And the God of peace shall be with you. As in ver. 7, with the promise of divine peace he concludes his exhortations, as Jesus in the beatitudes declares the blessedness of those who share in the true life.

IV. 10-20. PAUL'S GRATITUDE FOR THE GIFTS OF THE PHILIPPIANS, AND RECORD OF THEIR INTIMATE RELATIONS.

IN ii. 25, 30, Paul has already referred in passing to their gifts. It may be that already at the beginning of ch. iii. he was intending immediately to say more, when he was led to take up a fresh subject. But now at the close of his letter he says the things that have been in his mind from the first, and indeed were the occasion of his writing, although he has taken the opportunity to speak to them of matters far more important in their common life of Christian discipleship.

In this matter of giving and receiving Paul had stood in very special relations with the Philippians (cp. *Introd.*, p. 17). He was jealous of his independence, and careful to avoid any appearance of preaching for hire. But he had been too intimate with these friends at Philippi to fear any misconception, and their love had forced gifts upon him, which he gladly accepted as tokens of the affection that was so much to him. He knew also that such giving must be a source of happiness to them (*Acts* xx. 35), and avail for their progress in the Gospel.

iv. 10. I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me. Since Paul was last at Philippi he had taken the final journey to Jerusalem, had been imprisoned at Cæsarea for two years, and was now imprisoned at Rome. Very likely all through that time the Philippians had been unable to send him any gifts, even though they had desired it, as Epaphroditus may have told Paul. How formerly they had ministered to his need he tells in vv. 15, 16.

iv. 11. Not that I speak in respect of want. "You must not think that I have really suffered for the lack of your gifts, or that there is any shadow of complaint in what I say. Though I have had privations; I never thought bitterly that you might have helped me in my need. For in our new life in Christ such things are of little moment; ease or hardship is all one" (cp. 2 *Cor* iv. 7-18, vi. 9, 10).

For I have learnt in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. The word means "sufficient to oneself," independent of external circumstances. Cp. 2 *Cor*. ix. 8, "having all sufficiency;" 1 *Tim*. vi. 6, "godliness with contentment." Lightfoot quotes a saying of Socrates, explaining who was the wealthiest: "He that is content with least, for *sufficiency in oneself* is nature's wealth." So Emerson said of H. D. Thoreau, the poet naturalist of New England: "He chose to be rich by making his wants few and supplying them himself." Lightfoot also points out that in this passage Paul's description comes very near the Stoic ideal of the wise man, whose chief characteristic is that he is sufficient in himself, *wanting nothing, possessing all things*. He alone has all wealth, and is the true king and the true priest.

But the disciple finds his sufficiency in Christ, in whom his self is merged ; and through Christ in God. Cp. *2 Cor.* iii. 4-6, where, however, it is a different word that is translated "sufficiency."

iv. 12. **I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound.** "When I am suffering hardship, *in a low estate*, I can take it cheerfully ; and when I am in easy, pleasant circumstances, I am not elated or turned aside from my labours" (cp. note on iii. 14).

In everything and in all things, for emphasis, as we say "all and every," "each and all."

Have I learnt the secret, the word used of initiation into the mysteries of occult religious faiths. But here it was the mystery of godliness, open to the faith of every earnest disciple.

iv. 13. **I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me.** "I am strong in his strength." A.V. from a different text reads "through Christ," which in any case is understood (i. 20, 21).

iv. 14. **Howbeit ye did well, that ye had fellowship with my affliction.** "Though it is indifferent to me whether I suffer want or not, it is not indifferent to me or to you, whether I have your love, and feel that you care for me in my trials." The *fellowship* is genuine sympathy, which finds expression in their gifts.

iv. 15, 16. Paul recalls their former gifts, to show how much he cares for their sympathy.

In the beginning of the Gospel, "when I was first preaching among you, and the Macedonian churches were founded." It was the beginning of the Gospel to *them* (cp. i. 5). Or it may be that looking back over the ten years since he first preached at Philippi, and the wonderful

increase of the churches since then, it appeared to him literally as the beginning of the Gospel, of its life in the churches. To those years belonged all the epistles which we still have, and it seems altogether to have been the time of greatest activity in Paul's life.

When I departed from Macedonia. When, after preaching at Thessalonica and Berea, he sailed for Athens (*Acts* xvii. 14, 15). At Thessalonica he worked for his living, receiving nothing from the disciples there (1 *Thess.* ii. 5; 2 *Thess.* iii. 8). That the Philippians sent to him there once and again (ver. 16) is another indication, to be added to those of 1 *Thessalonians*, that Paul's stay there was of longer duration than might be gathered from the narrative in *Acts* xvii. 1-10. In 2 *Cor.* xi. 8, 9, he speaks of taking wages from "other churches" in Macedonia. There is no indication in the epistles to the Thessalonians that Paul received any gifts from the churches there after his departure, any more than he had done during his stay with them. But the disciples at Berea, where the Jews were "more noble" than those of the neighbouring city (*Acts* xvii. 11), may have afterwards joined with the Philippians in sending gifts to Paul at Corinth, although at first the Philippians were alone in this respect.

iv. 17. **Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account.** By thus dwelling on their past gifts he might appear to be asking for more. But he has already said that it is not the gift in itself that he values; and if now he speaks so much of their gifts and his joy in them, it is because of their deeper significance. They add to the treasures which the disciples are laying up in heaven by their good

deeds, by the enriching of their life of sympathy and fellowship, which afterwards will bear more abundant fruit for them in the blessedness of eternal life (cp. *Gal.* vi. 6-10).

iv. 18. But I have all things, and abound, . . . an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. This last gift of theirs, which is so abundant, he further likens to a sacrifice offered up to God (cp. *Gen.* viii. 20; *Exod.* xxix. 18, etc.; *2 Cor.* ii. 15). As of this one act of giving, so of the whole earthly life in *Rom.* xii. 1: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable [well-pleasing] to God." "Without love nothing is acceptable [well-pleasing] to God" (*Epistle of Clement*, § 49. Cp. also note on ii. 17, 18).

Quite apart from what their gift is to himself personally, as relieving his need, he knows that it must be well-pleasing to God, who "loveth a cheerful giver."

iv. 19. And my God shall fulfil every need of yours, according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. "My God," as in i. 3. In the fulness of the heavenly life, which will be theirs at the glorious coming of Christ, and the establishment of his kingdom, they will receive the reward of their faithfulness, and want for nothing.

iv. 20. The concluding thought of the glorious fruition of the disciples' life calls forth this ascription of praise, as in *Rom.* ix. 5, xi. 36; *2 Cor.* ix. 15; *Eph.* iii. 20, 21.

For ever and ever, literally, unto the ages of the ages, through endless ages.

IV. 21-23. FINAL SALUTATIONS AND BENEDICTION.

iv. 21. Every saint in Christ Jesus (cp. i. 1).

The brethren who are with me, that is, his personal companions, as distinguished from other Christians in Rome, afterwards mentioned (cp. ii. 19, 20 ; *Gal.* i. 2).

iv. 22. Especially they that are of Cæsar's household. The Emperor's "household" included an immense number of servants and attendants of every description, from the meanest slave to the most powerful courtier. It is not likely that any but the humblest had as yet become Christians ; but from the way in which they are mentioned it would seem that it was already known to the Philippians that there were disciples at least among the slaves of the imperial establishment. If, as Lightfoot thinks, the epistle was written soon after Paul's arrival in Rome, these converts may have been some of the brethren in Rome, who had received the Gospel before his coming, and were encouraged by his presence in their faithfulness (i. 14).

iv. 23. As he begins, so Paul ends with a benediction of grace.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.*

"THE Epistle to Philemon holds a unique place among the Apostle's writings. It is the only strictly private letter which has been preserved. . . . It is wholly occupied with an incident of domestic life. . . . Nowhere is the social influence of the Gospel more strikingly exerted ; nowhere does the nobility of the Apostle's character receive a more vivid illustration than in this accidental pleading on behalf of a runaway slave" (*Lightfoot*).

"Nowhere can the sensibility and warmth of a tender friendship blend more beautifully with the loftier feeling of a commanding spirit, a teacher and an Apostle, than in this letter, at once so brief, and yet so surpassingly full and significant" (*Ewald*).

"This epistle showeth a right noble, lovely example of Christian love" (*Luther*).

"Which of us can read the Epistle to Philemon (which to my mind is the most civil, pleasant, kindly, gentleman-like speech which I know on earth) without saying to ourselves, Ah, if we had but St. Paul's manners, St. Paul's temper, St. Paul's way of managing

* See Lightfoot's *Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 1875 ; Papers on the Epistle to Philemon in the *Expositor* for 1887, by Prof. F. Godet, D.D., and Dr. Alexander Maclaren ; Farrar, *St. Paul*, ch. 1. ; Conybeare and Howson, *St. Paul*, ch. xxv. ; Renan, *L'Antechrist*, ch. iv., p. 95 ; *Bible for Young People*, VI., ch. viii., p. 305, and ch. xi., p. 366 ; J. F. Clarke, *Ideas of the Apostle Paul*, ch. xiv., p. 326 ; and *Onesimus, Memoirs of a Disciple of St. Paul*, by the author of *Philochristus* (Dr. Edwin Abbott), London : 1882.

people, how few quarrels there would be in this noisy, troublesome world" (*Kingsley*).

"This little 'idyll of the progress of Christianity' shows that under the worn and ragged gabardine of the wandering missionary there beat the heart of a true gentleman, whose high-bred manners would have done honour to any court" (*Farrar*).

"We have here only a few familiar lines, but so full of grace, of salt, of serious and trustful affection, that this short epistle gleams like a pearl of the most exquisite purity in the rich treasure of the New Testament" (*Sabatier*).

THE little note which Paul wrote to Philemon is usually associated with the letter to the Colossians, as having been written at the same time and sent to the same city. Onesimus, the runaway slave, who is the subject of the letter to Philemon, is also mentioned to the Colossians as "a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you" (*Col. iv. 9*), as being in the company of Tychicus, the "faithful minister," whom Paul is sending to them.

But from another point of view it is quite as fitting to place *Philemon* side by side with *Philippians*, since these two of all Paul's letters are nearest akin in their unconstrained expressions of personal affection, and as dealing with matters of private and personal interest between the Apostle and his friends; while at the same time both are memorials of the Roman imprisonment. But the letter to Philemon stands alone as being a strictly private letter, addressed not to a church, but to one man.

The few words of this letter are very rich in suggestion. They lead us to picture the home of Philemon at Colossæ, a city in Phrygia, about one hundred miles east of Ephesus, in the beautiful valley of the Lycus. But even more they carry our thoughts to the prisoner

in Rome (cp. Introd. to *Philippians*, § iv.), by whom Philemon had some years before been brought into the fellowship of Christ. We try to imagine how it was that Onesimus was brought to Paul. The slave, who had fled from his master's house at Colossæ, wherever he went at first, would naturally drift to Rome, the great refuge of all outcasts of society, where in the multitude a man might hope to hide his shame and be safest from the vengeance of the law. Perhaps it was a happy chance, a meeting with Epaphras, the messenger from the church at Colossæ, who had come to Paul, or with some other acquaintance from his former life, that brought Onesimus to Paul. Or perhaps it was no chance, but his own seeking for help, because he had heard of Paul and wanted to be led into a better life. All we know is that Onesimus was brought to the "prisoner of the Lord," and gave himself up to the compassion and the healing power of Christian love.

He may have been quite an ordinary slave, abject in poverty, but also sick at heart and weary of the base life he had been leading, and so quickened to new hope and humility and trust by Paul's sympathy, that he would gladly have become a lowly servant of the Apostle. But it is perhaps more likely, especially from the way in which Paul speaks of him in the letter, from his desire to keep Onesimus with him as a dear companion and helper in his work in Rome, that the slave was of a higher order in education and refinement of nature, and as Dr. Abbott has beautifully pictured in his *Onesimus*,* familiar with the philosophy and also with

* The *Onesimus* of Dr. Abbott, author also of *Philochristus*, cannot be too highly spoken of as a work of historical imagination.

the religious unrest and searching of that time. And so the slave was capable of entering with a closer sympathy into the mind of the Apostle, and fitted to minister to him in the bonds of the Gospel (ver. 13) with a large measure of the mutual confidence of friendship.

It seemed, however, to Paul that he had no right to keep Onesimus with him in Rome. However much it might be to him to have such a companion, he felt that the decision of the matter ought to be in Philemon's hands, that Onesimus should return at once to Colossæ, and first of all be reconciled to his old master and receive forgiveness for his former wrong; then the future would be best determined as the "faith and love" of Philemon might suggest. It was in the spirit of no fugitive slave law that Paul sent back Onesimus to Colossæ. He asks with confidence that the slave shall be received as "more than a slave, a brother beloved" (ver. 16); and he writes this letter for Onesimus to carry with him, to make sure that Philemon shall understand how matters really stand. (See J. F. Clarke's *Ideas of the Apostle Paul*, p. 328; and on the question of Paul's attitude to slavery as an institution, the notes on vv. 14-16.)

The great charm of this little note has been fully recognised in modern times, as the opinions quoted on pp. 137-8 show. It is interesting to compare it with Onesimus tells his own story from childhood through all his changing fortunes, his intercourse with many different teachers (including Epictetus, the young slave at Hierapolis, who afterwards became so famous as a Stoic philosopher), his many searchings for truth and peace of mind, and then in very striking passages the way in which Paul at last brought him into "the net of the Gospel," and the last scenes of the Apostle's life.

letter written under somewhat similar circumstances by the younger Pliny (born 61 A.D.), who was governor of Bithynia in the reign of the Emperor Trajan, and was troubled by the rapid spread of Christianity, and the failure of repressive laws to hold it in check.

The following is Lightfoot's translation of the letter (*Ep.*, ix. 21):

"Your freedman, with whom you had told me you were vexed, came to me, and throwing himself down before me clung to my feet, as if they had been yours. He was profuse in his tears and his entreaties; he was profuse also in his silence. In short, he convinced me of his penitence. I believe that he is indeed a reformed character, because he feels that he has done wrong. You are angry, I know; and you have reason to be angry, this also I know: but mercy wins the highest praise just when there is the most righteous cause for anger. You loved the man, and, I hope, will continue to love him: meanwhile it is enough, that you should allow yourself to yield to his prayers. You may be angry again, if he deserves it; and in this you will be the more readily pardoned if you yield now. Concede something to his youth, something to his tears, something to your own indulgent disposition. Do not torture him, lest you torture yourself at the same time. For it *is* torture to you, when one of your gentle temper is angry. I am afraid lest I should appear not to ask but to compel, if I should add my prayers to his. Yet I will add them the more fully and unreservedly, because I scolded the man himself with sharpness and severity; for I threatened him straitly that I would never ask you again. This I said to him, for it was necessary to alarm him; but I do not use the same language to you. For perchance I shall ask again, and shall be successful again; only let my request be such, as it becomes me to prefer and you to grant. Farewell."

CONTENTS OF THE LETTER.

- vv. 1-3.—The greeting.
- vv. 4-7.—Expression of thankfulness and confidence in Philemon.
- vv. 8-20.—The pleading for Onesimus.
- vv. 21, 22.—Confidence that his request will be granted, and he will come to them.
- vv. 23-25.—Salutations and final benediction.

COMMENTARY.

1-3. THE GREETING.

ver. 1. Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy the brother. For the manner of the opening greeting in Paul's letters see the notes on *Phil.* i. 1, 2. In this private letter he makes no reference to the authority of his apostleship, but uses the expression that would most surely touch the sympathy of his friend. He writes as a prisoner in chains (vv. 9, 10, 13). Timothy would be well known to Philemon, as he was with Paul during the long residence in Ephesus (*Acts* xix. 22). He is called here *the brother*, or *our brother*, as in *Col.* i. 1, and *2 Cor.* i. 1. So of Sosthenes (*1 Cor.* i. 1) and of Apollos (*1 Cor.* xvi. 12). The word evidently meant a fellow-disciple. In *Phil.* ii. 22 Paul speaks differently of his young companion.

Philemon our beloved and fellow-worker. To him the letter is addressed, although others are mentioned with him in this greeting. All that we really know of Philemon is gathered from this letter. That he lived in Colossæ is inferred from the fact that his slave is now returning to him, and from *Col.* iv. 9 it seems that Colossæ is the destiny of Onesimus. Philemon was probably a man of some position, as his house was used for meetings of the disciples (ver. 2), and from the way in

which he is addressed it appears that he had been active and successful in the service of the Gospel (see also vv. 5-7). It was through the teaching of Paul that he had become a Christian (ver. 19). The tradition that he was bishop of Colossæ and was there martyred under Nero, cannot be taken as having any historical worth.

ver. 2. Apphia our sister, doubtless Philemon's wife, and also a Christian. As this letter concerns a slave of the household, there is all the more reason why she should be remembered, and her interest secured. A.V. *our beloved* is a different reading of the text, with much less MS. authority.

Archippus our fellow-soldier is supposed to have been Philemon's son. Certainly he must have been some relative, or at least a member of the household, or he would hardly have been mentioned here. The term *fellow-soldier* is also used of Epaphroditus (*Phil.* ii. 25). From the warning in *Col.* iv. 17, it is inferred that Archippus held a prominent place in the ministry of the church, either at Colossæ or Laodicea. Lightfoot supposes that it was at the latter place, and connects the warning with the reference in the Book of Revelation (iii. 14-22) to the luke-warmness of the church there.

The church in thy house (cp. *Col.* iv. 15 ; *1 Cor.* xvi. 19 ; *Rom.* xvi. 5). In each of these cases the phrase seems to imply not merely the family or household of the persons named, but the company of the disciples accustomed to meet in their house. At this time and for long after there were no special buildings erected for the common worship of the disciples, but gatherings were held in the houses of prominent members of the church (cp. Lightfoot's note on *Col.* iv. 15).

ver. 3 (cp. *Phil.* i. 2). After this verse until the final benediction Philemon alone is addressed.

4-7. EXPRESSION OF THANKFULNESS AND CONFIDENCE IN PHILEMON.

HERE also, as in most of his letters to the churches (cp. *Phil.* i. 3), after the opening greeting, Paul begins with the expression of his joy in the fellowship of the friends to whom he writes, in the true Christian life. So he touches in them the emotions with which he wishes them to read his letter.

In writing thus to Philemon he knows that he is making an appeal, which would be doubtful and dangerous if made to a man of uncertain temper. But he has confidence in the kindly nature of his friend and the power of Christian love, which has already been shown to be so strong in him. And as Philemon read these words we may be sure that they would be effectual in preparing the way for Paul's request. The confidence of the Apostle would compel him to the noblest mood of which he was capable (see also ver. 21).

The strength of feeling with which Paul writes appears in this passage to have somewhat confused the logical sequence of his thoughts.* But what he

* "It is sometimes hard to make out the grammatical construction of these Pauline epistles ; as difficult as to give the geometrical forms of the surface of a tumultuous torrent. It is said of Father Taylor that once in his preaching he suddenly stopped in the midst of a long sentence and said, 'Brethren, my nominative has lost its verb ; but I am bound to the kingdom of heaven all the same.' Thus intricate are Paul's sentences, in the fiery rush of his impetuous desire to warn, comfort, advise and strengthen his dear friends.

means comes out with sufficient clearness : his thankful remembrance of Philemon's love, so rich in its helpfulness to his fellow-disciples, and his faith in Christ, which is the foundation and inspiration of that love, and Paul's prayer that his faith may be yet more perfectly exercised, and so realised, as the fulfilment of the true life in Christ. Lightfoot gives the following paraphrase : " I never cease to give thanks to my God for thy well-doing, and thou art ever mentioned in my prayers. For they tell me of thy love and faith—thy faith which thou hast in the Lord Jesus, and thy love which thou showest towards all the saints ; and it is my prayer that this active sympathy and charity, thus springing from thy faith, may abound more and more, as thou attainest to the perfect knowledge of every good thing bestowed upon us by God, looking unto and striving after Christ. For indeed it gave me great joy and comfort to hear of thy lovingkindness, and to learn how the hearts of God's people had been cheered and refreshed by thy help, my dear brother " (*Colossians and Philemon*, p. 334).

ver. 4. I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers. The punctuation of the R.V., connecting *always* with the first words, is better than that of the A.V. Paul's constant thankfulness and remembrance of Philemon in his prayers naturally go together. He then gives the ground of his thankfulness,

But what is the chaff to the wheat? Where, in all human literature, can be found writings so vital, so glowing with the fires of the soul, so filled by every gale from heaven, uniting such tenderness, judgment, conscience, trust, hope, generous devotion, interest, sympathy?"—(Rev. J. F. Clarke, *The Ideas of the Apostle Paul*, p. 330.)

and in ver. 6 the burden of his prayer, adding afterwards a further reason for his thankfulness.

ver. 5. Hearing of thy love and faith. So the R.V. margin; the text reads *hearing of thy love, and of the faith which*, etc. The word here translated *faith* is sometimes understood as *faithfulness* or *fidelity* (as it is occasionally used by Paul: *Gal.* v. 22; *Rom.* iii. 3), and so both the love and the fidelity can be referred to the saints (the disciples) as well as to the Lord Jesus. But faith in Christ holds so prominent a place in Paul's thought that it is not likely that he would use the words here in any other sense, and it seems better to suppose a looseness of expression, by which the reference to the saints is added with the thought only of the love Philemon bears to them (cp. *Col.* i. 4). The last report Paul had heard of his friends was brought no doubt by Epaphras, the messenger from Colossæ, rather than by the slave (cp. ver. 23, and *Col.* i. 7, 8, iv. 12).

ver. 6. That the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual. This is the burden of Paul's prayer for Philemon, that the influence of his faith may be more widely felt for the increase of true Christian life. The *fellowship* (A.V. *communication*) is understood by Lightfoot to mean the friendly offices of sympathy, kindly deeds of charity, springing from his faith (as in *Phil.* i. 5). So the word would refer only to the working of faith in Philemon himself. But the following clause, **in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you**, suggests the thought of those who are influenced by the manifestation of Christian faith, so that the meaning may be, that the participation of the other disciples in Philemon's faith (coming more fully within

the circle of his influence, understanding more perfectly all that is good in him and his companions) may become more complete, **unto Christ**, producing in them the fruits of genuine Christian life, and so advancing the kingdom of Christ on earth.

The reading, "every good thing which is *in us*," which is found in a considerable number of MSS., would give the thought a wider range, not confined to the manifestation of the good things of Christian life in Philemon and his companions at Colossæ, but as they are in all true disciples.

ver. 7. This verse adds a further expression of Paul's confidence, giving another reason for his thankfulness. Whenever he heard of Philemon, it was to be rejoiced and comforted by the report of his love and his helpfulness to the rest of the disciples.

The hearts of the saints, so the A.V. must be amended, as in *Phil.* i. 8, etc., and *2 Cor.* vi. 12, where R.V. translates "*affections*." So also in vv. 12 and 20.

8-20. THE PLEADING FOR ONESIMUS.

ver. 8. **Wherefore** (because of his confidence in Philemon's love), **though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting**, in accordance with the duty of a Christian disciple. Although in Paul's letters the tone of pleading, persuasion, or exhortation, decidedly predominates, it is clear that he knew how to command, and that he claimed to the full the authority of his office as an apostle of Christ (cp. *1 Cor.* v. 13, xi. 17-34, xvi. 1; *2 Cor.* xiii. 2, 10; *Gal.* i. 12, ii. 11). But with Philemon he will only plead as a friend.

ver. 9. Being such a one as Paul the aged. So he describes himself to bring vividly before Philemon's mind the image of his friend and teacher, pleading "for love's sake." The words are usually understood in the sense that Paul here speaks of himself as an old man. The margin of the R.V., however, has "*an ambassador*," and Lightfoot adopts this rendering, referring especially to the phrase in *Eph.* vi. 20, "*an ambassador in chains*," in support of this view. The Greek word for *ambassador* differs only by one added letter, the diphthong *eu* instead of *u*, from the word for *aged*, and Lightfoot contends that the two words were even used interchangeably at the time when Paul wrote. So the text may be read in either way. In Lightfoot's view Paul in this and the following phrase is emphasising his authority by way of contrast to his pleading rather "for love's sake." But it seems more natural to let the tenderness of his pleading run through the whole sentence, and to recognise the touch of pathos in this reference to his age as well as to his chains. Lightfoot acknowledges that there is no difficulty, as some have supposed, in Paul here speaking of himself as an old man, and quotes the case of Roger Bacon, who at fifty-two or fifty-three spoke of himself as an old man, and Sir Walter Scott, who at fifty-five called himself "an old, grey man." Paul at this time may well have been sixty years old, and after all that he had gone through might naturally feel himself old (see the note on *Phil.* i. 23).

And now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus. This to his friend would be a yet stronger plea, that nothing might be done to give further pain to one who had so much to endure.

ver. 10. I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds. This order of the sentence, reserving the name of Onesimus for the next clause, is more forcible than the A.V. Although Philemon would already suspect what the request is going to be, Paul strengthens his appeal by this expression "my child," before he mentions the man's name, and then further lingers over his affection before actually making his request (ver. 17). He makes it clear to Philemon how much his heart is set on this cause. It is not an appeal of abstract justice; he loves this slave for whom he pleads, whom he himself in his imprisonment has brought to the new life in the fellowship of Christ (cp. *Intro.*, p. 139; *1 Cor.* iv. 15; *Gal.* iv. 19).

ver. 11. **Onesimus** was a very common name for a slave; it meant *helpful, profitable*. Hence the following play upon the word: **who was aforetime unprofitable to thee, but now to thee and to me profitable**. Formerly the slave had been unprofitable to his master, by whatever wrong he had done (ver. 18), and by his flight. Now, as he has become a Christian, and Paul's friend, and is to be received by Philemon, "no longer as a slave, but a brother beloved" (ver. 16), he is profitable, *Onesimus* indeed, to Philemon and to Paul himself.

ver. 12. **Whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart.** The reading of the A.V. is from another text, not so well supported. Before coming to the actual point of his request, Paul still continues to dwell upon the thought of what Onesimus is to him, and by what he says strengthens his appeal for Philemon's sympathy. "*My very heart.*" As Paul longs after his friends at Philippi with "the

heart of Jesus Christ" (*Phil.* i. 8), so it is like sending his own heart, when he sends Onesimus back to his old master. It will be impossible for Philemon to deal harshly with one whom Paul loves so well. As he writes these sentences Paul thinks of the letter already in Philemon's hand, and so speaks in the past tense of his own conduct in the matter and his desire to keep Onesimus.

ver. 13. Paul would gladly have kept Onesimus as a companion in his imprisonment, and delicately hints that Philemon would certainly have wished him to have that solace and help. For so the slave would render to him what he is sure Philemon would wish to repder, if it were possible. **In the bonds of the Gospel**, in his imprisonment, which was for the sake of the Gospel.

ver. 14. But without thy mind I would do nothing. He would not assume so much, and thus appear to compel Philemon's generosity, but rather deprives himself of a dear companion, that Philemon may do what he judges to be right in the matter. Paul evidently expects that Onesimus will not be received and treated as a mere slave, but as a Christian disciple, a brother. And if Philemon formally emancipates his slave and sends him back to Rome to minister to Paul, it will only be another instance of the effectual power of his faith, by which the hearts of the disciples have been already so much refreshed (vv. 6, 7).

vv. 15, 16. Even what would naturally have been a cause of anger and resentment in Philemon, Paul turns into a further plea for a kind welcome to the returning slave. "You cannot be angry any more," he urges, "at the thought of your slave's flight and the wrong he

did you, since it has turned to so great gain. Through this separation he is now brought back to you, no longer as a slave, but a brother beloved." Paul takes it for granted, with a generous confidence in his friend, that Philemon will feel with him in this matter, that now Onesimus returning as a Christian belongs to him no longer in the old sense as a mere temporal possession, but will be with him for ever in the companionship of the spiritual life, where there could be no thought of slavery and the old rights of the master.

The question whether Onesimus should be formally made a free man in the eyes of the law is not here dealt with; the thought is of the higher spiritual life, in which all men are alike in Christ (*Gal.* iii. 28; *Col.* iii. 11). The practical question whether slavery as an institution could be tolerated in a Christian society, could not at that time press with such urgency on the disciples as it did in later times, since to them the whole social order in which they lived seemed about to pass away, and all things to be made new. Thus in *1 Cor.* vii. 20-24 Paul speaks of slavery as a temporal condition, which may be endured without complaint, although to be a free man is better. And so, in dealing with the question of marriage, his judgment is evidently biassed by the expectation of the speedy dissolution of earthly bonds. Afterwards, when it became clear that the spirit of Christ had to conquer the old order and reclaim it for the kingdom of God on earth, there was no possibility of mistake, and slowly the power of justice and Christian love has worked out into practice the principle that no one who is to be "a brother, or a sister, beloved," can be in any sense a slave. This from

the earliest days of the church was implied in the fact that master and slave met as equals in worship and at the table of the Lord. And although it is acknowledged that in the early centuries of the church Christians did continue to hold slaves, without reproach, it was from the first with greater humanity, and with growing sense of *duty* rather than *rights*; and very soon the better mind began to assert itself, and the emancipation of slaves became an object of Christian endeavour.

"It was not by calling on the unhappy slaves to rise in armed rebellion against their masters that the Gospel struck off their fetters. It rather melted them by the fervour of Christian love, and so penetrated society with the principles of the Gospel that emancipation became a necessity" (Prof. F. Godet, *Expositor*, 1887, p. 154. See also *Gesta Christi*, a history of humane progress under Christianity, by C. Loring Brace, 1882; and Goldwin Smith's *Does the Bible Sanction American Slavery?* 1863).

He was therefore parted from thee, not as in the A.V. *he departed*, but making the reference to the slave's flight as gentle as possible. Lightfoot quotes the remark of Chrysostom: "He does not say, *for this cause he fled*, but *for this cause he was parted*: for he would appease Philemon by a more euphemistic phrase. And again, he does not say *he parted himself*, but *he was parted*: since the design was not Onesimus' own to depart for this or that reason: just as Joseph also when excusing his brethren says (*Gen. xlv. 5*), *God did send me hither*."

A brother beloved, especially to me. Beloved he must be to all the disciples, but especially to Paul, who had brought him within the circle of that love, and felt now like sending away his "very heart."

But how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. The final word in this pleading before the definite request. "If he is so dear to me, as a child newly born into this true life, how much more so must he be to you, with whom he is to live now in earthly companionship (the former member of your household returned, but in such far nobler guise), and in spiritual companionship, in the fellowship of Christ."

It might not be easy for Philemon so to love his former slave. It would be a test of the sincerity of his faith. And so with us, it is easier in the abstract to love all men as brethren, than in some concrete instances where pride or contempt or repugnance comes in, and prompts to very different feeling. But Christian faith allows no exception to the universal love of our brethren.

ver. 17. *If then thou countest me a partner receive him as myself.* This at last is what Paul asks for love's sake (vv. 9, 10). "If you count me as a comrade, a real friend, receive this man, whom I love so well, as as though it were myself."

vv. 18, 19. It seems that when Onesimus fled from Colossæ he was guilty of theft from his master. Paul does not say it in so many words, but doubtless Onesimus had confessed to him, and Paul puts in this sentence to disarm Philemon's resentment at the remembrance of that wrong.

Several recent commentators (Meyer, who quotes Chrysostom; Prof. Godet in the *Expositor*; the Bishop of Derry in the *Speaker's Commentary*, etc.) have pointed out that in these verses there seems to be a touch of humour. As Paul writes he is a prisoner in chains, and if he should escape an all too probable death, as now he seems

to hope, he has no possessions but what his friends may supply, or the scanty earnings of a poor trade. And he cannot for a moment seriously think that Philemon would accept any such payment, even if he could make it. It is a jest, "a gentle mockery of money business" (*Speaker's Commentary*) gleaming through the earnestness with which he writes, the playfulness of confident affection. He knows that Philemon owes and gladly gives him far more love than would cancel such a debt a hundred times, and with love and laughter in his heart he adds, "**that I say not unto thee how that thou owest to me even thine own self besides.**" It was through Paul's ministry that Philemon had received all the treasures of the Christian life.

Put that to my account. Paul writes as though he were transacting a serious piece of business. "Whatever Onesimus took from you, reckon it as though it were I who am your debtor. If you are still angry about it, be angry with *me*. I take over the debt."

I, Paul, write it with mine own hand, I will repay it. If one of his companions had so far been writing for him, as was their custom with the longer letters, we must imagine that at this point Paul stretched out his hand for the parchment or the writing-tablets, and bending over with a smile wrote those words himself. But very likely with so short a letter of this private kind he wrote the whole, and merely put down this formal pledge, with his name attached, as fully carrying out the humour of the moment.

That I say not unto thee. So the A.V. must be corrected. "I put down this pledge of payment, mocking at the possibility of your really caring to remember the

slave's debt, now that things have fallen out as they have done. You know I might just as well have said, *You owe me all you have. The debt is cancelled.*"

ver. 20. *Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord.* An affectionate appeal. The verb means to help, to benefit, to gratify. It is used for the expression of good wishes: "*Be happy.*" So here, "Let me have the joy that you can give by a hearty response to my request."

Refresh my heart in Christ. See ver. 7, and *Phil.* i. 8, 21, etc.,

The quick transition from humour to tenderness or pathos is perfectly natural. Indeed, the best kind of humour is incompatible with the want of tenderness (cp. Carlyle's essays on Jean Paul Fr. Richter). It is pleasant to find this vindication of the right of honest and kindly laughter to a place in our life beside the most sacred things. The sources of laughter and tears are close together, and not on the surface, but deep in the heart of a genuine humanity. Tenderness and pathos do not shrink from the companionship of humour in a generous and affectionate nature. And so as for a moment a smile lights up the face of the worn prisoner, it does not disturb the mood of tenderness and earnest pleading with which he writes, but rather finds for it a fresh expression, and brings him nearer to his friend, and to us, by that sure sign of his humanity.

There is a view of life and of religion in which no laughter can have a rightful place; but it is not a truly Christian view. Where human nature is looked upon as altogether ruined, and this world as given over to an evil fate, there cannot of course be any true joy in life, and religion must assume a stern and sombre

aspect, in which laughter would appear as evil mockery or desecration. But with those who find in this life not the ruins of a world betrayed to Satan, but the steadfast order of a universe that is divine, the case is different. If to us this earth, with all its shadows, is yet a beautiful court of our Father's house, in which human life may grow up noble and pure and true, why should we not rejoice? Even if the road we have to go along is hard and there are often painful things to bear, there are things bright and beautiful as well, and all the more we ought to welcome the companionship of genial humour, and the refreshment that honest laughter gives.

"My grandfather used to say that wit was almost a kind of goodness. He had both goodness and wit himself, and I wonder how he could have borne the burden his religion laid on him but for the easement given him by his power to laugh. He was a Puritan minister of the old stamp, holding with firm conviction that tremendous Calvinistic view of mankind's destiny, which, if it were true, might well banish every smile from human faces. Nature herself always bore witness in men's hearts against the dogmas of a ruined race and an endless perdition. For there remained in them, indestructible, the power to laugh! like a flag of cheer flying through all the black fogs of fear and phantasm, an unquenchable signal that the universe is God's after all" (George S. Merriam, *The Way of Life*, pp. 179-80).

ver. 21. Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say. The obedience would be to the law of the spirit of the Christian life, which Paul himself might on occasion feel bound to claim from the disciples by virtue

of his apostleship. But in this case he trusts his friend, and so has only pleaded for love's sake. He knows that Philemon will be even more abundant in his kindness and forgiveness than he has asked. Possibly Paul is here thinking of *emancipation*, although he does not speak the word, or the expression may be only of general confidence that there will be no limit to his friend's kindness.

There is nothing more effective than such confidence for ensuring the noblest response of the moral and spiritual nature in man. Such was the appeal of Jesus to Zacchæus (*Luke* xix. 5). By going to the publican's house as he did, the Master showed that he believed in the sincerity of his desire and his capacity for truer life. The confidence of a man of loftier nature generates faith in those who are to be led. Dean Stanley noted this of Dr. Arnold in his relations with the boys at Rugby. "Even with the lower forms he never seemed to be on the watch for boys; and in the higher forms any attempt at further proof of an assertion was immediately checked:—'If you say so, that is quite enough—*of course* I believe your word;' and there grew up in consequence a general feeling that *it was a shame to tell Arnold a lie—he always believes one*" (*Life*, ch. iii.). Remember also Nelson's famous signal at Trafalgar: "England expects every man to do his duty."

ver. 22. But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you. Was there again some kindly laughter lurking in these words, as though he said: "I am coming myself directly, so you cannot help being kind to the man"? Prepare me a lodging. If it were quite seriously

meant, as a matter-of-fact request that preparation for his visit should be made, it seems not very natural at so great a distance as Rome from Colossæ, and when after all his coming was quite uncertain. Here, as in *Phil.* i. 25, ii. 24, Paul evidently hopes to be liberated from his imprisonment. **Through your prayers.** See the note on *Phil.* i. 19.

23-25. SALUTATIONS AND FINAL BENEDICTION.

THE salutations from friends are the same here as in the letter to the Colossians, except that "Jesus, called Justus" is not mentioned. From the character of this letter the messages are naturally not so long.

Of **Epaphras** nothing more is known than can be inferred from this mention of him and the passages in the letter to the Colossians (i. 7, 8, iv. 12, 13). Although the name is practically the same, he must not be confused with Epaphroditus of Philippi (*Phil.* ii. 25-30, iv. 18). Epaphras had clearly been the chief teacher of the church at Colossæ, and during his absence in Rome was still anxious for its welfare. The thought implied in the term **fellow-prisoner** is of *one taken with the spear, a prisoner of war*. It is used of other disciples (*Col.* iv. 10; *Rom.* xvi. 7), and the corresponding verb is found in *Rom.* vii. 23; *2 Cor.* x. 5; *Eph.* iv. 8. Paul's "fellow-prisoner," therefore, may simply be one who shared with him his captivity or obedience to Christ; but when he writes from Rome there may be the further thought that these friends by their constant presence shared with him his literal captivity, which was for the sake of Christ (see note on *Phil.* i. 13).

ver. 24. The other friends who join in the salutations are further described in the letter to the Colossians (iv. 10-14).

Mark appears also in the narrative of the Book of Acts (xii. 12, 25, xv. 39), as the companion of Paul and Barnabas, and afterwards of Barnabas alone in missionary work. Tradition assigns to him also a close connection with Peter (cp. 1 *Peter* v. 13) and the authorship of the Second Gospel.

Aristarchus may have been well known to Philemon, as he was with Paul during his residence in Ephesus, and afterwards accompanied him in his last voyages (*Acts* xix. 29, xx. 4, xxvii. 2). He is spoken of as belonging to Thessalonica in Macedonia.

Demas is only a name to us, but the name of a faithless disciple, if we may trust 2 *Tim.* iv. 10.

Luke, in *Col.* iv. 14, is called "the beloved physician" (cp. also 2 *Tim.* iv. 11). The tradition that he was the author of the Gospel which bears his name and of the Book of Acts, is much less likely to be true than that he was the writer of the personal narrative worked into the Book of Acts, first appearing at xvi. 10 (cp. *Intro.* to *Philippians*, p. 8). Lightfoot suggests that Luke first joined Paul at the time of his illness in Galatia (*Gal.* iv. 13, 14), and was of personal service to him then, and that so the foundation of their friendship was laid (*Lightfoot*, note on *Col.* iv. 14).

ver. 25. See the notes on *Phil.* i. 2, and iv. 23.

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